ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY of THE GITA

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THE ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE GĪTĀ

BY

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TO

CHI. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

AND

CHI. D. RAMASWAMI

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE following lectures were delivered by me under the auspices of the University of Madras when I was Honorary Reader and I have now ventured to publish them in book form. An attempt is made in the chapters that follow to expound the ethical philosophy of the *Gītā* mainly in the light of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* by adopting western methods of critical enquiry. While the *Upaniṣads* enshrine the intuitions of Brahman and the *Vedānta Sūtras* establish their metaphysical basis, the *Gītā* brings out the essentials of the ethical religion of the *Upaniṣads* and dispels the misconception that *Vedānta* does not stress the moral values of experience. The metaphysic of morals as set forth in the *Gītā* and its philosophy of the self are developed in its first six chapters. The ethical religion of the *Gītā* is outlined in the next six chapters. In the last six chapters, the Divine Teacher sums up the *Vedāntic* religion of universal redemption and summons humanity heavily laden with ignorance, evil and sorrow to respond to the call of love and attain the eternal bliss of *mukti.*

I am indebted to Paṇḍit Kumāravāḍi Svāmin for explaining the *Gītā* to me as expounded by Rāmānuja and Vedānta Desika. My thanks are due to

the Madras University for having given me an opportunity to deliver these lectures and permitted me to publish them in book form. I am also deeply beholden to my friends Rao Saheb M. R. Rajagopala Aiyangar, Messrs. G. K. Rangaswami Aiyangar and K. R. Sarma and Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan for the help rendered by them in correcting the proofs and offering valuable suggestions. I gladly acknowledge my obligations to Messrs. Thompson & Co., Ltd., for their prompt and elegant execution of the work in these difficult times.

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MYLAPORE,
1st *July* 1943.

P. N. SRINIVASACHARI

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THIS edition is revised and enlarged by the addition of the VII Chapter on "Puruṣottama Vidyā" and by the index to the whole volume. I owe the publication of this edition to the kindness of Sri Rajah Ravu Venkata Kumara Mahipathi Surya Rau Bahadur, D.Litt., Rajah of Pithapuram, and I am thankful to him for his deep interest in the production of my works.

Vedānta to-day is, as was mentioned in a previous work, overweighted on the side of *Advaita* and it is necessary in the interests of *Advaita* itself and the comparative study of *Vedānta* that the other side as represented chiefly by *Viśiṣṭādvaita* should be known and the balance thus restored. This object is sought to be realised in some humble measure by the publication of the Sri Krishna Library Series and other works by the author in a comprehensive way in the light of the critical methods of Western Philosophy. The logical and metaphysical aspect is expounded in the works on *The Wisdom of the Upaniṣads, The Philosophy of Bhedābheda, The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita* and the forthcoming book on *The Aspects of Advaita. Rāmānuja's Idea of the Finite Self* brings out the psychology of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* based on metaphysics. *The Philosophy of the Beautiful* portrays its aesthe-

tic side which has its unique value. *The Synthetic View of Vedānta* is an attempt at harmonising the *Vedāntic* systems. The religion of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* is summed up in *The Ethical Philosophy of the Gītā* which is the quintessence of *Vedānta* and Hinduism in general. The works conclude with the expression of the synthetic genius of *Vedānta* and its spiritual hospitality which strike the keynote of the Divine Song.

My thanks are due to Sri K. R. Appalachariar for his kindness in preparing the index and to the G. S. Press for their neat and expeditious printing.

SRI KRISHNA LIBRARY,
MYLAPORE, P. N. SRINIVASACHARI
24*th January*, 1948.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The book was out of print for sometime. The author, Professor P. N. Srinivasachari, who passed away in 1959, delegated the copyright of the third and succeeding editions of this book to Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, in 1957. So, we have pleasure in bringing out the third edition priced at half the previous rate so as to bring it within the means of the readers. We hope this edition will reach a wider reading public.

4th November 1966. PUBLISHERS.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

PHILOSOPHY is the pursuit of wisdom and includes the metaphysical enquiry into the nature of reality as a whole and the moral and spiritual endeavour to realise it. Thus understood, it is known as a *dars'ana* in Indian thought, especially in its *Vedāntic* aspect. The problem of *Vedānta* may be stated in terms of Western thought in the three forms: What can we know? What should we do? What may we hope for? The answers to these questions relate to what are familiarly known as *tattva*, *hita* and *puruṣārtha* or the metaphysical, moral and religious aspects of experience. We can know Brahman as the Supreme Ground of the cosmic order. We ought to acquire the moral and spiritual discipline that is essential to apprehend Brahman. Then we can realise Brahman as the highest goal of life and attain its eternal bliss. Thus the philosopher that knows Brahman as the logical highest realises the supreme goal as the ethical and intuitional highest. To him, metaphysics, morals and religion are intimately blended. The subject of analytic enquiry is also the object of integral intuition.

Reality and value coincide and there is no contradiction between what is thought, what is willed and what is felt. *Vedānta* is a philosophy of religion in which the Absolute of metaphysics is the God of ethical religion and it alone satisfies the highest needs of life. This truth is enshrined in the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā* and the *Vedānta Sūtras*, and though their teaching is identical, their starting points and methods are different. While the *Upaniṣads* stress the mystic or intuitional aspect of *Vedānta*, the *Sūtras* emphasize the metaphysical side and the *Gītā* insists on moral and spiritual purification. The *S'ruti* and the *Sūtras* contain the eternal foundations of *Vedānta* and the *Gītā* is the revelation of its Divine Founder. The first brings out the immediacy of *Vedāntic* intuition, the second expounds its logical consistency and the third is the crown of *Vedānta*, the fulfilment of all religions and the completion of all philosophy.

Though the *Gītā* is generally regarded as the highest exposition of the ethical religion of Hinduism, its central teaching is misunderstood by hostile critics and not duly appreciated even by its advocates. The hostile critic rejects it on the ground that its ethics favours ritualism, quietism and passivity, that its religion does not promote the faith in universal redemption

and that its philosophy is a fusion of pantheism and theism ending in confusion. According to the higher historic criticism which claims to be unfettered by dogmatism, the author of the *Gītā* is not a historic person, but is the creation of the anthropomorphic tendency of the theistic mind which identifies Kṛṣṇa, a *Kṣatriya*, with Vāsudeva, the chief of the Sātvata clan, and deifies Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva as Nārāyaṇa. There is no divinity in an *avatāra*. His body is composed of mortal elements manifesting themselves in an extraordinary way. Kṛṣṇa is only a model man, an exemplar and not one descended from *Vaikuṇṭha*. The concrete form of God is only a concession to ignorance and is not real. According to the allegoric view, the dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna on the fundamentals of philosophy in the battle-field is impossible and therefore the battle should be interpreted symbolically as the moral warfare between good and evil in Kurukṣetra which is really the arena of the *ātman*. The *Yoga* theory regards Kurukṣetra as the body, the hundred cousins of the Pāṇḍavas as the hundred *nāḍis*, Arjuna as the soul and Kṛṣṇa as the *Yoges'vara* who controls the mind. Others say that the *Gītā* is the teaching of the logos as different from *Parabrahman* and that *nara* or Arjuna has to know the cosmic law of *karma*, abandon the idea of *nirvāṇa* or *mokṣa*

itself and work for universal welfare. Supernaturalism interprets the *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa as the miraculous descent of God from *Vaikuṇṭha* in a critical period of cosmic history when there was a decay of righteousness, with a view to destroying the evil-doer and restoring the moral order. The absolutists say that the *Gītā* transforms the metaphysical idealism of the *Upaniṣads* into theism with a view to adapting idealism to the daily needs of man. Brahman, the Absolute of metaphysics, becomes or lapses into *Puruṣottama*, the God of religion. The Personal God is less real than the Absolute, though more useful. Some idealists think that the *Gītā* presents a picture of supreme activity and sublime quietness and that it describes the gradual ascent from the concrete to the abstract, from the mystic quest to the transcendental quiet. It is thus the gospel of knowledge adapted to activity.

Every philosophy has a right to be understood from its highest point of view by a sympathetic insight into its essentials as taught by its best expositors. Judged by this criterion, the condemnation of the *Gītā* by the hostile critic betrays prejudice and incapacity for disinterested criticism. The historic method has only an empirical value in the world of space and time and cannot apply to transcendental spiritual truth. To doubt the author-

ship of the *Gītā* and its authenticity is to distrust the religious idea of God seeking man in his critical moments to save him from his distress. The *Gītā* deals with eternal truth immanent in the temporal series and the historicity of the *Gītā* really refers to philosophy taught through examples. To explain the *Gītā* as an allegory is to explain it away as a mere symbolic abstraction devoid of moral and spiritual content. The *Yoga* theory is equally futile as it leads to subjectivism and quietism. The absolutist's distinction between two Brahmans and between the non-dualism of the *Upaniṣads*, especially the Identity Philosophy of Yājñavalkya, and the theism of the *Gītā* and his evolutionary theory of the *avatāras* are opposed to the generally accepted view of the *Vedāntic ācāryas* that the three *prasthānas*, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Sūtras* and the *Gītā*, teach the same truth. The absolutist should either accept the integrity of the *prasthānas* or reject them *in toto* giving up the attitude of condescension and compromise. The view of naive theism that the incarnational motive is the establishment of cosmic righteousness by eliminating the evil-doer should be reinterpreted in the language of the religion of universal redemption. The law of righteousness is rooted in redemptive love and the object of divine descent into history is not merely the redemption of the wicked man from his

career of sin but is, even to a greater degree, communion with the *jñānī* or mystic who pines away owing to the agony of separation from his Other.* The Infinite enters into the human form in order to satisfy its soul-hunger and infinitise the self and satisfy its God-hunger.

The *Gītā* is difficult to understand though it looks easy in its apparent simplicity. It is as simple as it is suggestive. It is a book for the layman and is a riddle to the philosopher. It is said to be the quintessence of all *Vedic* knowledge, *samasta vedārtha sāra saṅgraha bhūtam.* A verse in praise of the *Gītā* runs as follows :—

sarvopaniṣado gāvaḥ
dogdhā gopālanandanaḥ |
pārtho vatsas sudhīr bhoktā
dugdham gītāmṛtam mahat ||

All the *Upaniṣads* are the cows ; Kṛṣṇa the cowherd boy, is the milkman ; Arjuna is the calf ; the milk is the *Gītā* and the wise man who drinks it enjoys eternal bliss. It is *sarva s'āstra hṛdayam*, the heart of all the *s'āstras.* Whatever is true, good and beautiful and has an eternal value is enshrined in it. In its universality it reveals God Himself. Every system of philosophy, ethics and religion has its own place and value in its synoptic survey. It

* iv. 8.

is the rock of ages and, through the ages, it has brought solace and comfort to millions of aching hearts immersed in the ocean of *samsāra* and sin and inspired them with hope and infused them with courage.

In the *Gītā*, divinity speaks to humanity through *nara*, the representative of man. It is a priceless possession of mankind on account of its universal appeal to all persons, at all times and in all places. Its purpose is not the establishment of a *siddhānta* by the refutation of all other theories, but is the synthetic harmonisation of apparently contradictory views by bringing out their common or essential features. Each system is evaluated in the light of its central teaching and is made to contribute to the perfection of the whole. Its ethics is not speculative, but is broad-based on the psychology of human nature in all its aspects of cognition, conation and feeling. The ultimate problems of ethics are metaphysical as they deal with the reality of the moral order of the universe. The metaphysics of ethics has its full meaning only in the religious consciousness of the goodness of God and the possibility of every man attaining godliness as revealed in the *Upaniṣads* and as exemplified in the *Itihāsas* and the *Purāṇas*. Brahman or the Absolute of the *Upaniṣads* becomes the Infinite or *Īs'vara* of the *Purāṇas* and incarnates

into humanity in order that man may be uplifted and made divine. The *Gītā* sings the glory of God becoming man without losing His divinity, to enable man to ascend to his Home by the paths of *Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga.* The way in which the Yogas are blended together brings out the synoptic insight or all-inclusive character of the *Gītā.* This truth is sought to be explained by various analogies which, however, are not quite sound. It is not an amalgam of isolated theories or merely a mechanical whole like a diadem set with precious stones. Even the analogies drawn from geometry and physics like the radii of the circle and the several colours of white light do not reveal the organic unity of its teaching. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is, as the name implies, the divine song whose soul-stirring melody enables man to soar Godward on the wings of its harmony. The keynote of the whole work is the blending of the ethical, spiritual and religious aspects of life and forms the main theme of the present study.

CHAPTER II

THE *GĪTĀ* APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF CONDUCT

IN the history of ethical thought, both in the East and in the West, the problem of conduct has, in the main, been approached in two ways. One is the *a' priori*, and the other the *a' posteriori*, method. The first considers morality and formulates the principles of conduct from an absolute point of view and enunciates criteria of distinction between right and wrong which are formal and rigorous in the extreme. The second adopts empirical standards which are more realistic and less exacting. The difference between the two is that between the application of pure reason and that of mere sensibility to the determination of the good. In between these extremes are various intermediate types in which the one or the other of these factors predominates. In European thought we have, on the one side, the extreme rationalistic tradition of the Cynics, the Stoics, Plato, and the Schoolmen culminating in the rigorous Kantian ethics. On the other, we have the ethics of sensibility represented by the theories of Aristippus, Epicurus, Hobbes, Hume, Bentham and Mill. In the East, the *Sāṅkhya*, the *Yoga* and the Buddhist schools

stand for the rationalistic tradition while the *Cārvākas* and the *Pūrva Mīmāmsakas* represent the opposite schools of thought.

A proper understanding of the nature and purpose of human life will show that none of these extreme schools can be right ; nor can the problem of conduct be satisfactorily solved by making an amalgam of these views in which one of the elements, reason or sensibility, is emphasized at the expense of the other. Human nature is not all sensibility, nor is it all reason. Sentience starts with the senses, but does not stop with them nor is it limited by them. It is transcended by life according to reason which subdues and harmonises the clamant and conflicting demands of sensibility and crganises them in tune with a higher purpose. But reason itself is inadequate to meet and account for all the situations of human life and has to be transcended by spiritual standards which defy intellectual analysis. The contradictions of morality can be resolved only in the consecrated sphere of religion where the storms of ethical strife are stilled in the calm of a devout life of dedicated service.

The metaphysic of the ethics of the *Gītā* avoids the extremes of the rival schools of thought. It adopts neither the high *a' priori* road of Kant cleared of everything that is empirical and emptied

of all emotional content nor is it hedonistic in its attitude aiming at the attainment of mere pleasure. It recognises the world of sense and sensibility as furnishing the *data* of ethics. Ethical philosophy is the investigation of true moral, as opposed to mere rational, freedom; it should solve the conflict between reason and passion and it is sustained by a recognition of the possibility of attaining self-sovereignty. As distinguished from the exclusive methods of other schools of ethics, the *Gītā* approach to the problem of conduct is synthetic in character. According to the *Gītā*, states of moral life are *stages* in a continuous development which culminates in the realisation of the self in a state of *kaivalya*. Morality has its ultimate meaning in the faith that goodness is grounded in God and that He alone as the *Puruṣottama* who is suprapersonal, is the absolutely good and is the pattern of perfection. The apprehension of God as the ground and goal of goodness, an approximation to Him by an appropriate attitude governing the details of our daily life and conduct and the attainment of the supreme stage of the pure consciousness of the Perfect Self—these are the distinctive features of *Gītā* ethics. The ethical philosophy of the *Gītā* pictures both an ascent and a descent. It goes up from the empirical to the transcendental and comes down from the absolute stage of realisation of the

Supreme Self to the practical concerns of every-day life. It traces the progression from the empirical ethics of *kāmya karma* to the metaphysical stage of *niṣkāma karma*, then through self-realisation or *ātmāvalokana* to the realisation of *Puruṣottama*. It takes us on from *prakṛti* to *puruṣa* and from *puruṣa* to *Puruṣottama*; from *viṣaya kāma* to *ātma kāma* and ultimately to *Bhagavat kāma*.

Not only is the *Gītā* way an ascent from sensibility to spiritual perfection, it is also a deductive descent from the supra-personal to the personal and the rational. The lower life is partial and unsatisfying. The higher is the fulfilment of the lower and can alone explain it. The contradictions of *kāmya karma* on the level of sensibility are resolved in *niṣkāma karma* on the intellectual level. This again is transfigured into *ātma kāma* or the urge for the realisation of the self in the spiritual sphere and culminates in *kaiṅkarya* or consecrated service to all living beings and to the Supreme Self that dwells within them. Thus the *Gītā* way traces the transition from the popular idea of conduct as the ethics of sensibility to the morals of *niṣkāma karma* arising from self-knowledge. Its final stage is that discerning faith which transforms every deed into an act of devotion to God. This ascent from sensibility to spirituality is the essential part of the ethics of the *Gītā* and sym-

bolises at once moral freedom and moral fulfilment. The *manas* which is torn asunder and drawn adrift by the senses has to be controlled by *buddhi* which exerts a steadying influence and makes for true freedom based on self-determination. Self-determination presupposes a self which, in its turn, implies a Super-Self which is its source, sustenance and satisfaction.

A sensible system of morals should take account of the psychology of conduct. Even as psychology without ethics leads to mere behaviourism, so ethics without psychology will be quite formal and devoid of content. The *Gītā* analyses voluntary action into five factors: (1) *adhiṣṭhāna*, (2) *kartā*, (3) *karaṇa*, (4) *ceṣṭā* and (5) *daiva*.

adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā
karaṇam ca pṛthagvidham |
vividhāś ca pṛthak ceṣṭāḥ
daivam caivātra pañcamam || —xviii. 14.

Every moral act is a five-membered conative process and involves the combined activity of these elements. The first is the body or the *adhiṣṭhāna* which is the complex of the elements. It is *mahābhūtasaṅghātarūpa* and is known as the *kṣetra* or living temple of the Lord. The *kartā* is the finite self who is the doer of the *karma*. The *karaṇa* is constituted by the cognitive and the conative organs, the *jñānendriyas* and the *karmendriyas*,

which provide the apparatus of voluntary action and the complex of the stimulus-response mechanism. *Ceṣṭā* refers to the varied activities of the *prāṇa* sustaining the body and its functioning. The last and most important factor is *daivam* or the Supreme Self who is also the Inner Self of the individual, the ultimate *niyantā*, the prime cause of all conduct, the *pradhāna hetu* and the end of all endeavour.

The main source of defect in the several extreme schools of ethics is to be traced to their concentration on one or other of the first four of these elements to the subordination, and often to the exclusion, of the others and to their failure to recognise the last factor which is at once the ground and the goal of conduct. The synthetic character of the *Gīta* approach reveals itself in the fact that it takes note of all of them and fits them into a system which gives them all their proper place and function in an integrated moral life. Before proceeding to show how this is done, it will be useful to consider the several schools of ethics which have developed from an undue emphasis of one or other of the parts of the mechanism of conduct and expose their inadequacy to provide the ideal of moral life and the standard of moral criticism.

The first among these imperfect ethical theories is materialistic ethics. It is the ethics of sensibility

associated with the *Cārvāka* school. It denies the distinction between the *deha* (body) and *ātman* (soul). In fact, it asserts that there is no *ātman* which is separate from the body (*dehātirikta*). The *ātman* is a mere aggregate of the four elements and the so-called spiritual self is only a secretion of the brain like fermented sugar becoming intoxicating liquor. Personality is only a protoplasmic product. The *summum bonum* of life is the satisfaction of animal inclinations. Holding that perception is the only source of knowledge, the *Cārvākas* look upon a man who renounces worldly pleasures as a timid fool. To them the visible world is the only reality and the cause of things is to be found, not in anything apart from them, but in their own inherent nature. They sum up their teaching in the admonition :

> While life remains, let a man live happily, let him feed on ghee even though he runs into debt.

In the sixteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, we have a scathing denunciation of the life of *tāmasic* selfishness recommended by the materialistic thinkers and *asuras*. In that chapter called the "*Daivāsura-sampad Vibhāga Yoga*," the Lord distinguishes the divine from the demoniac qualities and observes :

> dambho darpo (a) bhimānaś ca
> krodhaḥ pārusyam eva ca |

ajñānam cābhijātasya
pārtha sampadam āsurīm || —xvi. 4

pravṛttiñ ca nivṛttiñ ca
janā navidur āsurāḥ |
na śaucam nāpi cācāro
na satyam teṣu vidyate || —xvi. 7.

asatyam apratiṣṭham te
jagad āhur anīśvaram |
aparasparasambhūtam
kimanyat kāmahaitukam || —xvi. 8.

kāmam āśritya duṣpūram
dambhamānamadānvitāḥ |
mohād gṛhītva (a) sadgrāhān
pravartante (a) śucivratāḥ || —xvi. 10.

Hypocrisy, arrogance, conceit, wrath, harshness and folly are demoniac qualities. Men with these qualities know the secret neither of action nor of abstinence. They have no regard for purity or good conduct and do not care for truth. They do not believe that God created or sustains the world. To them all things are only lust-born. Enslaved by insatiable desires, possessed by vanity and conceit, they are the victims of delusion and foul motives. Everything in the world is mechanically explained by them and this *āsura Vedānta* has no place in it for supernatural agencies. It implies the development of brute power and the deification of egoism. The *āsuric* man perfects the self-regarding instincts and those of pugnacity, sex, reproduction and

jealousy. The whole world is, according to him, lust-born and lust-sustained and the *summum bonum* of life is an infinite multiplication of wants and the acquisition of maximum sensual pleasure.

The *Cārvāka* theory suggests some parallels in the types of egoistic hedonism in Western thought as represented by Aristippus, the Greek, Hobbes, the Englishman, and Nietzsche, the German. Hedonism is the theory that pleasure is or ought to be the only end and aim of human conduct. Pleasure is the only good and every one should secure at every moment as much pleasure as possible. This is the ethical hedonism of Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic school. Epicurus recommended a life of pleasure as distinguished from moments of pleasure. To him pleasure meant freedom from pain and care. While Aristippus referred only to bodily pleasures, Epicurus included mental pleasures as well. Hobbes was a psychological hedonist who said that man seeks only pleasure which is his sole good. Bentham developed the theory of hedonistic utilitarianism and described a calculus of pleasures on the basis of each man counting for one and no man as more than one. J. S. Mill tried to improve upon Bentham's theory by recognizing qualitative differences among pleasures forgetting that thereby he was abandoning the fundamental hedonistic position. The pleasures

of the senses are different not only in degree but in kind from the happiness of intellectual pursuits and the bliss of communion with nature. Nietzsche propounded the theory of the superman emphasizing the will to power and the desire to enslave others with all its egoistic implications.

The theory of egoistic hedonism, though attractive to the popular mind, cannot stand philosophical examination. It has been powerfully criticised both in the East and in the West and is not seriously held by thinking men. Arising from a wrong sensationalist psychology that all knowledge is reducible to sensations of the moment, it has developed into sensationalist ethics giving primacy to the feeling tone of these sensations. It makes man a creature of sensibility and renders reason the slave of passion. "Nature," said Bentham, "has placed man under the governance of pleasure and pain." The office of reason is to minister to the passions augmenting their hedonistic tone as much as possible. The theory forgets that the self is not the senses and that happiness is not the addition of sense-pleasures. Reason is not the slave of passion nor is it merely the regulative principle making an adjustment between pleasure and pain. It is sovereign in its own right. It enters into the content of conduct as its exponent. The pleasure-philosopher whose motto is pleasure for pleasure's sake con-

founds the pleasure of choice with the choice of pleasure. Pleasure is the subjective feeling that anticipates or attends success. The pleasure of pursuit is not the pursuit of pleasure. The recognition of qualitative differences among pleasures points to the existence of a criterion of choice which knocks the bottom off the hedonistic position. The pleasure of a wise man is the same as that of the fool *qua* pleasure; but, if the former is chosen in preference to the latter, it is not on account of its pleasure-content, but of a qualitative superiority. The distinction between animal pleasure, intellectual happiness and spiritual joy points to a criterion of conduct different from mere pleasure. If it is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, that is because pleasure by itself has no value. The element of quality which is the ground of preference is an extra-hedonistic consideration. On a rigorous application of the pleasure theory, the passage from egoism to altruism would be impossible. Service and sacrifice and the other-regarding virtues have no place in life on the hedonistic hypothesis. It puts a premium upon selfishness, and the hedonistic calculus so beautifully simple in theory is absolutely unworkable in practice.

The *Vedāntic* philosopher recognises that the good is the pleasant, but that the pleasant is not

always the good.* The aggregate of pleasures is not pleasure. The *Gītā* point out that it is the *avyavasāyātmikā buddhi* which goes in search of the manifold of material pleasures as opposed to the eternal bliss of Brahman. The former are *alpa* and *asthira,* trivial and transient. Metaphysically speaking, hedonism identifies personality with sensibility and gives an empirical view of conduct. The sensualist follows the propensities of his nature and gratifies his cravings and appetite. The moral man is naturalised. But this is opposed to the *Gītā* idea of human nature ; for man is not the product of *prakṛti.* The whole difficulty in the hedonistic position arises from a wrong understanding of the place of sensibility in moral life. Sensibility furnishes the material of moral life but is not its mainstay. It is the datum which furnishes the content of conduct ; but it is by no means the criterion of conduct.

The *Pūrva Mīmāmsā* theory of ethics traces the distinction of right and wrong to *Vedic* injunctions. The *Vedas* furnish a list of prescriptions and prohibitions (*vidhi* and *niṣedha*) and also explain the results that accure from following the former and desisting from the latter. The *Mīmāmsā* view of

* *Kath. Upa.* I. ii. 1 and 2.

morality is only a specialised form of hedonism, as the practice of *dharma* and the avoidance of *adharma* are intended to secure merely happiness in life here and a state of felicitous existence in life after death in worlds other than this. The second chapter of the *Gītā* criticises this view of the basis of moral obligation in the following verses :

yāmimām puṣpitām vācam
pravadantyavipaścitaḥ |
vedavādaratāḥ pārtha
nānyad astīti vādinaḥ | |
kāmātmānas svargaparāḥ
janmakarmaphalapradām |
kriyāviśesabahulām
bhogaiśvaryagatim prati | |

bhogaisvaryaprasaktānām
tayāpahrta cetasām |
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhau na vidhīyate | |

traiguṇya viṣayā vedāḥ
nistraiguṇyo bhavārjuna |
nirdvando nityasattvastho
niryogakṣema ātmavān | | —ii. 42 to 45.

The *Mīmāmsaka* extols the *Veda* as a body of eternal, impersonal and absolute truths dealing with *dharma* and *adharma*. By literally obeying

the *Vedic* imperatives, the votary propitiates the gods, obtains earthly benefits of various kinds, power, prosperity and progeny here and the pleasures of *svarga* hereafter. The insistence on rites and rituals, which is the main part of the *Mīmāmsā* theory of conduct, leads to sacerdotalism which, while preserving the husk of morality, misses the grain. As the *Gītā* observes, foolish persons rejoicing in the letter of the *Vedas* indulge in flowery speech. These persons are *kāmātmānaḥ* (seekers of pleasure), *svargaparāḥ* (desirous of entering *svarga*) and spend their time in the performance of ceremonials with a view to attaining pleasure and power. The code of conduct that is prescribed in the *Vedas* becomes formal and conventional, and escape from conflicting situations is sought in casuistry and text--torture. A pleasure-seeker can never be actuated by reason nor can he develop a contemplative attitude.

On the ritualistic theory, gods and men enter into a compact with each other, the men propitiating the gods with their sacrifices and the gods, in their turn, conferring on men manifold material benefits.* This idea of holding commerce with the gods, who after all seem to use men as their tools, and not as ends in themselves, is repugnant to the

* iii. 11.

moral consciousness. The pleasures of sensibility even in the celestial worlds are paltry and perishing, and men have to come back to the earth when their stock of merit is exhausted; even Brahmā is subject to this fate.* But, the bliss of Brahman has eternal value and does not admit of arithmetical calculation. While the *Vedic* good has only a limited value being inferior in quality and duration; the *Vedāntic* good, which alone should be the object of ethical endeavour, has a pre-eminence invested with eternal values. Whoever allows himself to be deluded by the glittering fruits of sacrifice will be decoyed from the high moral road leading to self-realisation. The seeker after the highest sifts from the *Veda* what is relevant to his spiritual needs just as the thirsty traveller drinks from the tank only as much water as would quench his thirst:

yāvān artha udapāne
sarvatas samplutodake |
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu
brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ || —ii. 46.

Vedic ceremonialism involves the endless activity of the *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which, so long as they function, obstruct stead-

* viii. 16.

fastness, purity and self-possession. The man who aspires for self-realisation should free himself from the sway of the *guṇas* and should be *nistraiguṇyaḥ*. But such a consummation is delayed or defeated by the practice of a mere conformist ritualistic religion which, by its dualism of merit and demerit, *puṇya* and *pāpa*, whirls man into the unending cycle of *samsāra*.

Even as an exclusive emphasis on the element of *adhiṣṭhāna* among the constituents of voluntary action leads to the extreme forms of materialistic and egoistic hedonism of the *Cārvākas* and the *Vedavādins*, the tendency to formulate a view of morality on the basis of the function of *ceṣṭā* (activity) comprehending the *pañca prāṇas* leads to what may be called the ethics of vitalism. The vital airs constitute the *sine qua non* of life-activity; for, without them, the other organs of the body would lose their potency and power. Spiritual excellence is impossible without bodily efficiency. The practice of subjecting oneself to severe austerities and doing penance with a view to acquiring ethical and religious merit does not conduce to the health of the soul. This has only the effect of tormenting the body and does violence to the deity enshrined in it. Having no *s'āstraic* sanction, all this is motived by vanity and egoism.

As the *Gītā* observes :

aśāstravihitam ghoram
tapyante ye tapo janāḥ |
dambhāhankārasamyuktāḥ
kāmarāgabalānvitaḥ | |

karśayantaś śarīrastham
bhūtagrāmam acetasaḥ |
mām caivāntaś śarīrastham
tān viddhyāsuraniścayān | | —xvii. 5 & 6.

On the hypothesis that spiritual excellence is impossible without mental efficiency and steadfastness and that this cannot be secured in the absence of physical fitness, the ethics of vitalism proceeds to distinguish various kinds of food and their effect on human nature. For the support of life and the maintenance of the body, food is necessary. This food is of a three-fold nature, *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*, and generates the corresponding qualities in the person who eats it. Of these, the *sāttvika* is "dear to the pure" and is to be preferred to the other two. It promotes life, energy and vigour, fills one with joy and is supremely delicious.

āyus sattvabalārogya —
sukha prīti vivardhanāḥ |
rasyās snigdhās sthirā hrdyāh
āhārās sāttvikapriyāḥ | | —xvii. 8.

The *rājasa* foods are bitter, hot and pungent, dry and burning and produce pain, grief and ill-

ness. The *tāmasa* foods are stale and flat, putrid and unclean and are "dear to the dark-minded".*

It is interesting in this connection to note a novel theory of *prāṇaism* according to which the *Gītā* is a manual of mind-cure analogous to the modern system of psycho-analysis. It is claimed that this interpretation would solve many of the problems of the *Gītā* till now enshrouded in mystery. The main problem of the *Gītā* is said to be how a diseased and disordered mind like that of Arjuna, suffering from a division of the conscious and the sub-conscious phases of the ego, can be restored to moral health by a supreme psycho-analyst like Kṛṣṇa. It is urged that the disorder in the mind is due to the habitual repression of the impulses from the outside and of the emotions of the mind. The accumulated and suppressed feeling shows itself in perspiration, palpitation, cardiac pains, tremor, fear and grief. Arjuna suffers, according to this view, from psycho-neurosis. The *As'vattha* tree is not a myth nor an allegory, but a real apparatus. According to this theory, the physical soul or *kṣara puruṣa* and the psychical soul or *akṣara puruṣa*, both shoot forth from the Absolute. The sub-conscious is the great "within", which is a vital part of the super-conscious. Kṛṣṇa is said to cure

* xvii. 9 and 10.

the disease of Arjuna's mind by directing it to the divine qualities of the psyche which constitute the *daivī sampat*. The divine consciousness is then aroused and the mind is said to be cured. Then Arjuna exclaims *naṣṭo mohas smṛtir labdhā* ("My delusion is destroyed, I have now regained my memory"). Yet another interpretation of the *Gītā* from the point of view of vitalism is offered by another philosopher. He observes that *prāṇa* is the vitalising force embedded in the nervous system and the dynamics of active life may be traced to it. It is the cosmic energy that sustains the inanimate order and causes the evolution of life. It functions in the body and the vital organs and energises the *manas* and *buddhi*. It is not confined to the physiological functions. The quickening of desire is due to *prāṇa*. *Sāttvika prāṇa* is quieting and contributes to the conservation of energy. *Rājasa prāṇa* makes for force and fatigue. *Prāṇa* is not merely biological; like the *elan vital* of Bergson, it is also cosmic. *Prāṇāyāma* as a process of *Yoga* is a psycho-vital means for effecting the in-flow of cosmic life. The pulse of the Infinite vibrates through the *suṣumnā nāḍi*. The stir of *prāṇa* is due to will, and finite life becomes an instrument of Infinite Consciousness. *Prāṇāyāma* makes the body a medium for spiritual expression. It is neither the suppression nor the sublimation of

animal life, but is its spiritual transformation by the infusion of cosmic *prāṇa*. When sensibility is thus controlled, it becomes a vehicle of spiritual life and even bodily life can be made immortal.

Any system of ethics which does not take into account all aspects of human nature is bound to be defective, being one-sided. Vitalistic ethics takes up the category of life and life-giving *prāṇa* and proceeds on the assumption that all those kinds of conduct that conduce to the maintenance and promotion of the forces of life and bodily health are alone ethically valuable. But the self of man is not exhausted by vital forces, and personality is more than *prāṇa*. The maintenance of bodily health is certainly necessary for living a full life in the true sense of the term; yet, it is not the sole criterion of conduct. The condition of right living is mistaken for its constituent and an exaggerated importance is attached to it. The biological approach to the problem of reality refers to a lower category and cannot exhaust its entire nature. *Buddhi* is a category higher than *prāṇa* and the rational element in man makes for his excellence in a more real sense than the mere vital element, and so biological ethics has to be transcended by rationalistic ethics.

Any acceptable theory of ethics must give an account of the moral ideal in conformity with the

demands of reason. The history of ethical thought is the story of the conflict between the claims of sensibility and reason to determine the good, and the tendency to a large extent has been to gravitate towards rule by reason as opposed to the sway of sensibility. This opposition obtains in the life of man himself and conduct determined by the principle of reason is generally considered to be more meritorious and more in accord with the moral ideal. This is the main characteristic of the Buddhistic and *Sāṅkhyan* theories in India and the Stoic and Kantian views in the West. There has been a tendency to read Buddhistic influence in the *Gītā* ethics. The *Gītā* theory of *rāga, dveṣa* and *moha* explained in the twelfth chapter is examined and many similarities with Buddhistic ethics are traced. The five steps of *nirvāṇa* mentioned by the *Gītā* are the same as those of Buddhism. Buddhistic psychology regards the *ātman* as the aggregate or *skandhas* of the flesh and treats the belief in individuality as pure heresy. Buddhism ethicises the law of *karma* and divests it of its ceremonial aspect and insists on disinterested action. Even the love of humanity is from disinterested motives and is not prompted by sentiment. To the Buddhist the *summum bonum* of life is the extinction of sense and sensibility and the attainment of *nirvāṇa*, and the way to it is contained in the gospel

of the four noble truths: Evil is essentially the aching thirst for life and consequent suffering. The root cause of suffering is the aching thirst for life. The way to the extinction of sin and sorrow is the quenching of desire. This is attained by the eight-fold path consisting of (1) right belief, (2) right aim, (3) right word, (4) right action, (5) right living, (6) right endeavour, (7) right-mindedness and (8) right meditation. *Nirvāṇa* is progressive freedom from the ten fetters and ultimate cessation of individual existence.

While there are obvious similarities between the rationalistic element in the *Gītā* theory of morals and the ethical theory of the Buddhists, it is wrong to conclude therefrom that the *Gītā* was influenced by Buddhism. On the other hand, it is the *Gītā* itself that has influenced Mahāyāna Buddhism in its ethical aspects. The *Gītā* is more in conformity with the past than Buddhism and propounds a positive metaphysics of morals. The *Gītā* employs the concept of *Brahmanirvāṇa* in the place of the purely negative ideal of Buddhistic *nirvāṇa*.

It is held by some writers that the *Gītā* theory of morals is based on *Sāṅkhyan* ethics. Garbe says: "The teachings of *Sāṅkhya Yoga* constitute almost entirely the foundation of the philosophical observations of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. *Sāṅkhya* is often mentioned by name, while the *Vedānta*

appears only once (*vedāntakṛt*, xv. 15) and then in the sense of *Upaniṣad* or treatise. Accordingly, when we think merely of the role which the philosophical systems play in the *Gītā* as it has been handed down to us, and when we consider the irreconcilable contradictions between the *Sāṅkhya Yoga* and the *Vedānta*, the *Vedāntic* constituents of the *Bhagavad Gītā* prove not to belong to the original poem." There is a fundamental difference between the *Gītā* approach to the problem of conduct and that of the *Sāṅkhya*. The *Sāṅkhya* is interested in the analysis of the self and its theory of *Yoga* does not involve any *synthetic* union. Its aim is isolation and not integration. *Puruṣa* is the silent seer, but he sees nothing. He is pure consciousness, but, owing to his reflection in *buddhi* which is an evolute of *prakṛti*, he appears to have cognition, conation and feeling. *Prakṛti* is constituted by three *guṇas* of intelligence (*prakāś'a*), energy (*pravṛtti*) and slothfulness (*moha*), whose interaction disturbs the deluded *puruṣa*. The moment he withdraws from the cosmic scene, he attains *kaivalya*; he ceases to give his consent to all the coquetry of *prakṛti*. Then, the ego-sense is destroyed and the obsession ceases. The *Gītā* accepts the *Sāṅkhya* analysis of conduct, but gives its own meaning of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* and reconciles theism, pantheism and monism. The *Sāṅkhya*

mentioned in the *Gītā* is not the *Sāṅkhya* system but a process of rational discrimination of the self and the *Yoga* is *Karma Yoga*. *Sāṅkhya* is the vision of the right and the good and *Yoga* is the way and the principle as embodied in practice. It is at once the theory and practice of conduct. The *Sāṅkhyan* ethics leads to passivity and *sannyāsa* or entire renunciation of action. But the *Gītā* theory makes the *jīva* morally free as it is the subject of moral judgment having cognition, conation and feeling.

The *Upaniṣad* speaks of two *puruṣas* as two birds on the same tree "where the one tastes the fruits of life, and the other, not tasting, looks on ".* There are three different *puruṣas* recognisable in the *Gītā*; the *kṣara* or mutable in nature, the *puruṣa* embodied in *prakṛti*; the *akṣara* or immutable *puruṣa*, the silent self freed from *prakrti*; and the *uttama puruṣa* or Supreme Lord. This is said to be the *uttama rahasya* (supreme secret) of the *Gīta*.†

The Buddhistic and *Sāṅkhyan* rationalistic theories outlined above have some affinity with Stoic and Kantian views of morality. According to the Stoics, ethics is built on physics; what man ought to do is derived from what he is. Virtue is the supreme good and the wise man alone is happy. The Stoic

* *Mund. Upa.*, III. i. 1. † xv. 16 to 20.

rule of life is to live consistently with nature. The Stoic formula is to live according to the scientific knowledge of the phenomena of nature, doing nothing which the universal law forbids. Animals follow the laws of nature, namely, self-preservation and race-propagation and man follows his rational nature. The important Stoic virtues are courage, wisdom, justice and temperance and the corresponding vices are fear, discontent, greed and elation.

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn ;
And lust of fame was but a dream,
That vanished with the morn.
And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!"
Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore ;
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure. —E. BRONTE.

Cloistered virtue is a form of cowardice. Later Stoicism included softer feelings. While it rejects the stormy state of the soul, it admits that the soul is like the surging sea and not an ice-bound lake. According to the Stoic ethics, the outward looking point of view is abandoned and introspection takes the place of impulsive action. This insight reveals to us an inner authority. The hedonist refers to externality and reduces virtue to mere expediency

or prudence. The Stoic insists on being good rather than on doing good.

Christian asceticism as reflected in the monastic ideal of the middle ages had much in common with the Buddhistic way of life and it insisted on the conquest of the sensuous nature of man and the strict adherence to canonical law as the ruling principle of conduct. Leading a life of celibacy in cloistered seclusion, the men of religion withdrew from the world and subjected themselves to privations of all kinds and spent their days in penance and penitence. Their ethics was based on the idea that the starvation of the senses is necessary for the culture of the soul. It was an one-sided development of personality which did not do justice to all aspects of human nature. The extreme rationalism of Kant was also characterised by the formalism and rigour associated with Christian asceticism. Kant was largely influenced by the Stoic view of life and he also insisted on the elimination of sensibility and on the ordering of life according to the dictates of reason. We shall consider later the similarities and differences between the *Gītā* ethics and the Kantian and shall point out in what respects the former is more satisfactory. Meanwhile, we may observe that the Kantian view of morality is as extreme on the rationalistic side as the hedonistic view is on the empirical side and

falls short of the synthetic ideal presented by the *Gītā*.

Thus, the moral ideal has been portrayed in various ways by the several schools of ethics both in the East and in the West. They may be called the materialistic, the vitalistic, the rationalistic and the ascetic theories of morality. Each of them, as we have seen, concentrates on one of the factors constituting the dynamism of conduct to the exclusion or subordination of the others and, being thus based on a partial view of human nature, is, therefore, defective and unsatisfactory. Sensuous pleasure, physical health and efficiency, rational determination or rigorous asceticism which starves the senses, none of these can exhaust the moral ideal and provide a way out of the contradictions of life. Each of these has to be transcended by the next in the series to which it has to give place in the development of the moral man. And, more than all these is the part played by *daivam* in the evolution of conduct, the fact of divine determination within the ambit of human freedom. It is this synthesis between the human and the divine, the insistence on the recognition of the fact that "our wills are ours to make them Thine" that invests the *Gītā* theory of morality with a completeness which is lacking in the partial one-sided views that we have so far considered.

CHAPTER III

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONDUCT ACCORDING TO *THE GĪTĀ*

ETHICS is closely related to psychology, metaphysics and religion. 'What can I know?' is the problem of metaphysics. 'What ought I to do?' is the problem of morality. 'What may I become?' determines the religious quest. The answer to these three questions should have a psychological foundation and one should properly understand the nature of the 'I' that is to know, to do and to become. The kinds of knowledge and experience with which these subjects deal are interrelated though they can be analysed and distinguished logically for the purpose of specialised study. For the formulation of a satisfactory system of ethics, we should start with certain psychological prolegomena giving an account of the nature of the self that acts and the essential constituents of voluntary action. That is a procedure common alike to Eastern and to Western systems of ethics. Generally speaking, it will be found that the main cause of an unsatisfactory ethical theory is a wrong psychology.

From the ethical point of view, the self or *ātman* is considered as a moral self or *kartā* with freedom as its essential quality but acted upon by the influences of *prakṛti* and its three *guṇas*. *Vedāntic* ethics distinguishes between the *ātman* which is a pure spiritual entity and the empirical self or *kṣetrajña* which owing to its *avidyā* identifies itself with the *ksetra* composed of *prakṛti, ahaṅkāra, mahat* and the *mahābhūtas*. The *ātman* is not a bye-product of matter or *prakṛti* or a psychophysical series or *saṅghāta* nor even the synthetic unity of apperception, but is an eternal self-luminous spiritual entity distinct from the twenty-four categories of *prakṛti* and the *sthūla* and the *sūkṣma s'arīras*. The several *indriyas*, the organs of knowing and doing, pertain to the body. The existence of the *ātman* as *puruṣa* is proved by direct experience and not by means of *pratyakṣa* (perception) and *anumāna* (inference). The *ātman* abides in its being as a self-conscious entity and such self-cognition presupposes the distinction between the self and its attributive consciousness. *Prakṛti* is a fleeting flux due to its *pariṇāmic* process and it consists of the five elements, the five cognitive and the five conative senses with the *antaḥkaraṇa* as the *sense-commune* and the five *tanmātras*. The *sūkṣma s'arīra* is the subtle psychic continuum in which the experiences of the moral self in its begin-

ningless career are conserved. Consciousness consists of different strata including what is distinctly given, what is dimly given and what is implied. It shades off into the sub-conscious and the unconscious and the three form the psycho-physical continuum of the moral consciousness. The psychology of the moral self thus deals with the empirical self which is caught up in the confusions of *avidyā* and subjects itself to the vicissitudes of *karma.*

Though the *jīva* is essentially free, its moral life is largely influenced by its character, mental content and heritage in the long course of its evolution. As Browning says, we should, in forming a moral estimate of a person, take into account all his fancies and thoughts, all immature instincts and unsure purposes. The mind is not a collection of perceptions, feelings and ideas, but a psycho-physical continuum. The moral self lives in a world of will which includes not only the momentary distinct will occupying the focus of attention, but also the dim will and the implied purpose of the whole life. It contains the three aspects of cognition, conation and feeling and also the ancient *samskāras* and *vāsanās* which are imbedded in the impulses, instincts and dispositions making up the subtle body. Volition is ideomotor action involving the two stages of deliberation and decision.

Psychology is closely related to physiology and the study of volition includes, in the larger sense, reflex action and semi-voluntary and random movements. Reflex action is a response to stimulus without the intervention of consciousness. Instinct is an inherited psycho-physical disposition issuing in cognition, conation and feeling. Impulse is the consciousness of the tendency to movement, but is not deliberate action. Mood is a higher stage and is described as a predisposition to certain specific forces of emotion and is different from temperament which is a more persistent form of tendency. William James analyses five steps in the development of the will. At first there is an easy transition from drift to certainty in a direction determined from outside. In the second stage, we drift with the conviction that things will turn out right in the end. In the third stage, the determination comes from within. In men with strong emotions of the world-shaking type, there is a sudden outburst of pent-up passion passing from the easy to the strenuous mood. In the fifth and final stage of decision, there is a feeling of inward effort. Every desire implies an idea of an end and therefore involves cognition, conation and feeling. Where there is a conflict of desires, we deliberate on the alternative courses of action and there is a mental see-saw. Finally, when the moral self identifies

itself with the desired end, deliberation leads to decision. When the action is repeated, a beaten pathway is laid. Then action becomes secondary and automatic and is, as it were, second nature.

The central idea in the *Vedāntic* psychology of the moral self is the theory of *karma* and rebirth. It involves the operation of the law of causation on the moral level. The moral judgment is passed not merely on the doer or *kartā* nor only on the deed or *karma*, but also on the doer doing the deed. Every act is causally determined by its antecedent, and determines its effect. The present is the child of the past and the parent of the future. The moral freedom of the self presupposes its immortality and eternity and when the gross body is dissolved at death, the self, with its *sūkṣma s'arīra* or subtle body in which every *karma* done in its moral adventure in the past is conserved, is born again in a new environment suited to its moral development. In this way, life and death form a cycle like day and night or the seed and the tree. Though, from the scientific point of view, every moral act may be explained in terms of cause and effect, from the ethical point of view every *karma* presupposes a *kartā* or moral agent who has the freedom to shape his destiny. The moral self can attain self--sovereignty and rise to the status of Brahman or sink into slavery and lapse to the level

of the brute. The *ātman* is by nature eternal and blissful; but, owing to some ancient confusion (*anādi karmarūpa avidyā*), which cannot be causally analysed, it mistakes itself for *prakṛti*, becomes a mode of matter, subjects itself to the hazards of metempsychosis and the wheel of *karma* on the sub-human, human and celestial levels and thus virtually forgets its birth-right of spiritual sovereignty and stability. There are, however, degrees in the contractions and expansions of the spiritual consciousness due to differences in the working of *karma*. Psychologists classify *kama*-ridden *jīvas* into different types according to the relative preponderance of temperamental differences. The mediaeval classification of temperaments into the mercurial, phlegmatic, melancholy and sanguine humours does not admit of scientific proof. According to James, the will may be healthy, precipitate or perverse. When the vision is right and the action obeys the vision, the will is healthy or normal. It is unhealthy when it is precipitate or perverse. In the former case, action follows the stimulus rapidly. The perverse type may be the obstructive or the explosive will. The latter is the result of the mercurial temperament with impulsive motor energy. In the former case, the will is blocked by an unduly long period of deliberation and hesitancy.

The *Gītā* psychology of ethics is based on the distinctions of the three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and their interaction. Our desires and dispositions, moods and temperaments, actions and tendencies, feelings and emotions are all to be traced to the influence of these *guṇas* and to their varying preponderance in human nature.

sattvam rajas tama iti
gunāh prakṛtisambhavāḥ |
nibadhnanti mahābāho
dehe dehinam avyayam || —xiv. 5.

Each *dehī* has his own *svabhāva* or *asādhāraṇa bhāva* (characteristic nature) determined by his inherited dispositions.

na tad asti pṛthivyām vā
divi deveṣu vā punaḥ |
sattvam prakṛtijair muktam
yad ebhis syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ || —xviii. 40.

No *jīva*, whether in terrestrial or in celestial abodes, is exempt from the influences of the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. The *guṇas* are interdependent and not independent, though they have their own specific mental tendencies or psycho-physical functions. The essential nature of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* may be summed up respectively in the three words, *prakāś'a*, *pravṛtti*, and *ālasya* which may be translated roughly as serenity, restlessness and slothfulness. *Sattva* illumines the intellect, harmonises

conflicting desires and thus conduces to happiness. Clear and distinct ideas lead to virtue and health of mind. Aristotle says that virtue is determined by reason. *Rajas* is restless activity that seeks pleasure in domination, display and sex gratification. It is *rājasa* vitality that goads the self to adventures and endless multiplication of wants. It is the itching for works.

rajo rāgātmakam viddhi
tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam |
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya
karmasaṅgena dehinam || —xiv. 7.

When the self is beclouded by *tamas*, its thought is confused, the will is perverted and it sinks into slothfulness. *Tāmasa* sluggishness is steeped in ignorance and its engrossing darkness and manifests itself as soporific repose.

tamastvajñānajam viddhi
mohanam sarvadehinām |
pramādālasyanidrābhiḥ
tan nibadhnāti bhārata || —xiv. 8.

While *sattva* makes for the illumination of intelligence (*prakāś'a*), *rajas*, connotes *pravṛtti* or restless activity and *kāma* or lusts of the flesh and *tamas* implies ignorance (*moha*) and inertia (xiv. 22). *Sattva* lights the upward path to perfection. *Rajas* is the restless longing for the pleasures of *svarga*, and it imprisons the self in the

see-saw of *samsāra*. The *tāmasa* self is hurled down into the most primitive stages of life like the worm. Thus the mingling of the three *guṇas* in varying degrees of preponderance constitutes the driving force of human conduct and helps or hinders moral endeavour and spiritual progress. While the activity of the *guṇas* has a constraining and determining influence on our nature, it is open to us to acquire the one or the other of them in an increasing measure. In this lies the essence of human freedom which is the basis of ethical life.

The psychology of the *jīva* as *dehī* conjoined with the theory of the *guṇas* is closely related to physiology. The *guṇas* are influenced by the food that maintains the organism. The nature of the food reacts on the mind and moulds its character. As the *Upaniṣad** points out, it is the purity of the food which a person takes that purifies the mind and makes it *sāttvika*. It is the healthy *sāttvika* mind that makes for morality and fosters spirituality. *Sāttvika* food is delicious and nourishing and conduces to the health of the body, longevity of life and the development of the intellect or *jñāna*. *Rājasa* food is bitter, sour, pungent and saline and it creates restlessness and mental instability and is the cause of the worries of life. *Tāmāsa guṇa* is caused by putrid, intoxicating and unclean

* āhara suddhau sattva suddhih. *Ch. Up.*, Vii. xxvi. 2.

food.* Seeing that right action can flow only from a pure spirit characterised by *sāttvika* nature, it is our duty to avoid all those kinds of food which will lead to the development of *rājasa* and *tāmasa* qualities and eat only such as will contribute to the promotion of *sāttvika* qualities. The man who does not follow this rule, abuses his freedom and becomes degenerate.

In every moral judgment, there are six factors, *viz.*, the subject, the object, knowledge, discrimination, determination and satisfaction (*kartā, jñeya, jñāna, buddhi, dhṛti* and *sukha*). These aspects correspond generally to the western analysis of the mental process into cognition, conation and feeling. Every moral action involves the mental apprehension of the good and its appreciation and adoption in actual conduct. Merely knowing the good without feeling an urge to realise it and without an endeavour in that direction is of no value. Intellectual assent is a necessary preliminary to the moral process, but does not exhaust it. A yearning for ethical perfection without the guidance of a discriminating mind is no better than blind impulse groping in the dark without proper guidance. Doing good without a knowledge of its nature and without an en-

* xvii. 8 to 10.

grossing eagerness for it reduces moral life to a mechanical process and man becomes an automaton. Each of the six factors enumerated above is influenced by the three *guṇas* and determines one's moral disposition. The *Gītā* in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters gives an elaborate analysis of the sway of the *guṇas* in all the minute details of moral life and it may be briefly summarised here.

When the subject of the moral judgment (*kartā*) is determined to action by the *sattva guṇa*, he is free from egoism (*anahamvādī*) and utilitarian motives and his serenity is never affected by success or failure. The *rājasa* is the *rāgī* seized by the restless desire for the objects of sense and he calculates more on the consequences of duty than on its intrinsic worth. The *tāmasa* lacks decision. He drifts and procrastinates and does his work in a stupid, stubborn and mechanical way (xviii. 26—28). *Sāttvika* consciousness or *jñāna* is the right perspective which consists in discerning the *ātman* as the underlying unity of all living beings. *Ātman* is the one spiritual self that is the background of the empirical 'me'. When the mind delights in knowing multiplicity and division and not unity, it is *rājasa* consciousness. *Tāmasa* knowledge is the crude and narrow faith in polytheism and animism, and the worship of ghosts and malignant spirits. The object of a moral judgment

is the ought (*kartavya karma*). In its *sāttvika* aspect, conduct is freedom from egoism and love of extrinsic values. Egoism or self-love is the *rājasa* side and the *tāmasa* act is impelled by instinct and inclination (xviii. 23—25). *Sāttvika buddhi* is decision after deliberation and therefore implies intellectual assent as well as volitional consent. *Buddhi* is the moral consciousness of what is right or wrong, good or bad, and it alone distinguishes man from the lower animals. It becomes *rājasa* when, instead of being a disinterested love of truth and virtue, it is influenced by prejudice and gets distorted and distracted. *Tāmasa* understanding consists in mistaken knowledge and perversity. *Buddhi* influenced by the three kinds of *guṇa* produces respectively *yathārtha jñāna* or *nis'caya* (knowledge which is true to fact), *ayathārtha jñāna* (knowledge which is not true to fact), and *viparīta jñāna* (knowledge which is the opposite of truth) (xviii. 29—31). The fifth factor is *dhṛti* or determination, functioning through *manas*, *prāṇa* and the *indriyas*. *Sāttvika* determination is the habit of concentration on the ultimate nature of life, which is so essential to the attainment of *mukti*. The *rājasa* will is interested only in the market or economic values of virtue (*phalākāṅkṣā*) and not in its absolute value. The *tāmasa* will is the victim of fear and misery (xviii. 33—35). Lastly, when

desire is realised, there is self-satisfaction. On the *sāttvika* level, virtue is an ever-enduring joy. The practice of virtue is bitter in the beginning and blissful in the end. *Rājasa sukha* is the reverse of the *sāttvika* state as it results from a life of restless adventure. It begins with thrills and ends in disappointments. The seductive pleasures of the senses are sweet like nectar in the beginning, but in the end are harmful like poison. *Viṣaya sukha* (the pleasure of the senses) ultimately turns out to be *viṣa* or poison in effect. While poison produces physical death, the lusts of the flesh cause moral atrophy and spiritual extinction. *Tāmasa sukha* is the pleasure of somnolence. Instead of spiritual joy, there is spirituous intoxication (xviii. 37-39).

The psychological analysis of these factors has an ethical significance. The ethical value of conduct is more important than its psychological content and it consists in the progression from the lowest grade of *tamas* to the highest stage of *sattva*. The *kṣetra* in which the *jīva* lives forms a suitable environment for the evolving self and it is by contact with it that the *ātman* as *kṣetrajña* experiences the pleasures and pains of bodily life and finally seeks *mokṣa*. *Prakṛti* and *puruṣa* are different, as *prakṛti* is *jaḍa* or inert being subject to the natural law or the *pariṇāmic* process and *puruṣa* is a self-luminous entity subjecting itself to the moral law

of *karma*. The contact between the two resulting in the sorrows of *samsāra* is *anādi* (without beginning) and so cannot be causally explained. But there is an end to the bondage of *karma* and then the *jīva* is freed from its subjection to *prakṛti* and its *guṇas*. By means of *viveka* (discriminating intelligence) the *kṣetrajña* is released from the contact with the *kṣetra*.

CHAPTER IV

THE ETHICS OF *NIṢKĀMA KARMA*

(Transition from *Kāmya Karma* to *Niṣkāma Karma*)

BY far the most distinctive contribution of the *Bhagavad Gītā* to ethical thought is the idea of *niṣkāma karma* which is as unique in conception as it is perfect in its synthesis of the opposing aspects of moral life. The only other theory comparable to it is the categorical imperative of Kant; but noble and grand as it is, the German philosopher's moral prescription fails to do justice to all the factors of the ethical situation. Its rigorous formalism and relentless suppression of sensibility make it at once impossible and unacceptable. The *Gītā* theory of disinterested work is based on a synthetic view of human nature and harmonises its contradictions; it does not suppress the senses and their activities, but sublimates them to spiritual purposes. The senses are spiritualised, and *karma* is transformed into *kaiṅkarya*. There are certain points of similarity between the theories of the *Gītā* and of Kant which are very instructive. Both of them imply the primacy of practical reason and

the superiority of the moral values of life to the material. But the Kantian antithesis between ethics and metaphysics finds no counterpart in the *Gītā*. Far from morality being opposed to the metaphysical or religious quest, it is in fact contributory and is a necessary preliminary to a rich and fully developed spiritual life. The *Gītā* theory of morals is based on a rational insight into the true nature of human personality and is intended to lead to the discovery and enrichment of that personality. The way of *niṣkāma karma* prescribed by the *Gītā* is based on a view of life characteristic of a rational metaphysics and points to, and paves the way for, a divine life drawing man closer and closer to itself, until he becomes full of it and ultimately one with it. Grounded on a metaphysical attitude, moral activity is intended to secure religious attainment.

The theory of *niṣkāma karma* is based on the fundamental fact of the universality of *karma*. Psychology speaks of two dissimilar types of mind, the active and the ascetic. Voluntaristic ethics addresses itself to the reality of a dynamic ordering of nature as illustrated in the flux of phenomena and it furnishes the apparatus of moral achievement. Every thought, act or word is an effect of *karma*, whether it is sensory-motor or ideo-motor. Morality implies activity which is at once the birthright and the inescapable duty of man.

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api
jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt |
kāryate hyavaśaḥ karma
sarvaḥ prakṛtijairguṇaiḥ | | —iii. 5.

No man can remain still even for a moment without doing some work. Every one is made to act, in spite of oneself, by the qualities of one's nature. Opposed to this is the recommendation to cease from all kinds of work, to live a life of *sanyāsa* or renunciation involving complete cessation from work. On this view, incessant activity involves endless work and worry and, if aspiration is not crowned with achievement, discontent and depression are inevitable. The contemplative ideal insists on the attainment of *s'ānti* or peace which is incompatible with the "fever and fret of life" associated with *karma*. The ascetic insists on introversion and extinction of desire as the *sine qua non* of securing eternal life (*amṛtatvam*). But the active man regards incessant work as the ideal of life. The *Gītā*, as we shall see more fully in the sequel, offers a synthesis of these two ideals and reconciles them in the unity of *niṣkāma karma* which implies activity with a specific attitude.

The practice of *niṣkāma karma* presupposes a true understanding of man's essential nature and involves a preliminary discipline which alone can generate the appropriate attitude. In the first

instance, it insists on a moral discipline of the intellect known as *sāṅkhya buddhi* and *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi*. Owing to ancient *avidyā*, which is its original (or originless) sin, the pure self forgets its intrinsic worth and spiritual destiny and wanders in the world of ignorance and sin (*avidyā* and *karma*). In its endless hazards and hardships, it at last ascends to the level of humanity and tries to realise its rationality. Man, though often impelled by the instincts and appetites of his animal nature, has yet, unlike the animal, the conception of the end. He is self-conscious and has *viveka*. He has the power of discrimination and the ability to arrive at a decision. In the dynamism of activity, he can distinguish the *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, the *kṣeṭrajña* from the *kṣetra*, and realise that all work is due to the acti ty of *prakṛti* and that the *puruṣa* or true Self is untainted by *karma* and is not attached to it. The *puruṣa* has a nature of his own and is distinct from *prakrti* and its twenty-three modifications which form the material of the universe. The *ātman* or *dehī* is ever self-conscious and free. It is *apariṇāmī*, immutable, *i.e.*, not subject to the mutations of matter. It is unborn, eternal, permanent and ancient and does not die with the body.* Being immaterial, it does not suffer decay, death or decomposition. It is *pramātā*, the subject that

* ii. 20.

is self-conscious and conscious of the world of nature. Distinct from the *dehī* is the *deha* or body opposed to it in every way. Owing to its *pariṇāma svabhāva*, the body goes through a flux of cyclic transformations and is subject to birth, youth, manhood, age, decay and death, familiarly known as the six-fold changes (*ṣaḍbhāva vikāras*). The body is an aggregate of elements (*bhūta saṅghāta*), a mere psychophysical series which the self elicits from nature to fulfil its moral destiny. An aggregate is only an accidental conjunction and, therefore, its several parts can enter into new combinations. Birth and death are a part of this phenomenal flux and they belong to the *deha* and not to the *dehi*. At birth, the self puts on a new garment, as it were, for its moral use and death is merely the putting off of that garment when it has worn out or served its purpose.

vāsāmsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya
navāni gṛhṇati naro (a) parāṇi |
tatha sarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇān —
yanyāni samyāti navāni dehī | | —ii. 22.

By disciplined discrimination, the individual realises his true nature and knows that he is different from *prakṛti* and its mutations and is, therefore, indifferent to them. The *sthitadhīḥ* or person of firm understanding is be-

yond the dualism of hope and fear, gain and loss, joy and sorrow; without attachment to anything, he has neither hates nor desires. This true insight into the nature of the *ātman* coupled with a will to realise it more and more fully makes for real wisdom and supreme bliss. As reason and will are one, *sāṅkhya buddhi* develops into *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi* without which no spiritual endeavour is ever possible. *Avyavasāyātmikā buddhi* is consciousness of sensibility in which the mind is distracted by desire. Such a mind is clamant and chaotic. Its eccentricity clouds the reason and corrupts the will. Dwelling on the objects of sense, the mind gets attached to them. Anger comes in the wake of attachment. From anger arise delusion and loss of memory. The understanding is then destroyed and that results in spiritual death.* But *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi* consists in non-attachment to sensuous objects, in the stability of reason and concentration of will. When discrimination ends in decision, the mind is dominated by a single-minded devotion to moral and spiritual effort. Then *buddhi* issues its commands to *manas* without yielding to its impetuosity. When a man's mind runs after the objects of sense, it carries off with it the understanding, as a gale carries away a ship on the waters.† *Viṣaya kāma* or desire for material

* ii. 62 and 63. † ii. 67.

objects, to which one is drawn by the senses, is varied and causes vacillation of mind. But, if a man's senses are withdrawn from their objects, his wisdom is firmly set. In him, *viṣaya kāma* is displaced by *ātma kāma*. The realisation of his inner self is the supreme end of all his endeavour. He is self-satisfied (*ātmanyevātmanā tuṣṭhaḥ*). In *viṣaya kāma*, the sensitive self is shut up in its particular perishing feelings; but reason demands a process of unity and stability which can be achieved only by the concentration of the mind. The will is divided and dissipated by the propulsions of sense and becomes unstable and obscure; but *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi* insists on collectedness and concentration or the unity of activity. The principle of a good will which is at once enlightened and concentrated, frees *karma* from the perils of moral particularism and bases it on a rational comprehensiveness. If the mind is withdrawn from sense-objects and given a moral direction, this fleeting flux of desires vanishes and there arise moral fixity and spiritual finality. The acquisition of such *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi*, of a disciplined discrimination, is an essential preliminary to the attitude of mind which alone will enable one to practise *niṣkāma karma*.

According to the *Sāṅkhyan* view, a life of activity resulting from the interplay of *prakṛti* and

puruṣa is an obstacle to *mukti* and keeps the self in chains. The intelligent *puruṣa* should try to break loose from these shackles and delight in *Jñāna Yoga* rather than in *karma*.

dūreṇa hyavaram karma
buddhi yogād dhanañjaya | —ii. **49.**

Far inferior is *karma* to *yoga*. But, by merely avoiding active work, no man can ever be free from a life of action.

na karmaṇām anārambhāt
naiṣkarmyam puruṣo (a) śnute | —ii. **4.**

Nor can one remain inactive even for a moment.

na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api
jātu tiṣṭhatyakarmakṛt | —iii. **5.**

Thus, the ethical situation seems to involve a dilemma. Whereas it is impossible for any one to remain inactive at any time, a life given to incessant activity seems to be opposed to mental equipoise and serenity which are so necessary for spiritual progress. The *Gītā* succeeds in resolving this dilemma by its theory of *niṣkāma karma*. All *karma*, or voluntary action, involves the idea of an end. The realisation of this end brings satisfaction to the doer, while its frustration fills him with disappointment and depression. Generally speaking, *karma* is *kāmya karma*, motived by the

realisation of an end, and is determined by the subjective inclinations of *rāga* and *dveṣa* (appetition and aversion) and the objective consideration of utility, *lābha* and *alābha* (gain and loss). The *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and their interplay are ultimately responsible for these factors that determine the reason and direct the will in respect of the *kāmya karmas*.

The wise man who knows the *tattvas* and distinguishes between the *ātman* and *prakṛti* is able to trace the root of all *karma* and assess it at its proper value. He traces all empirical actions to the interplay of the *guṇas* and the feeling of *ahaṅkāra* by which the *ātman* falsely identifies itself with the body. He knows that the true self is essentially free from such empirical determination.

prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni
guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ |
ahaṅkāravimūdhātmā
kartāham iti manyate ||

tattvavit tu mahābāho
guṇakarma vibhāgayoḥ |
guṇā guṇesu vartante
iti matvā na sajjate || —iii. 27, 28.

The philosopher who knows the nature of the self attributes his *karma* to the activity of the cognitive and conative sense organs and the vital impulse

and is convinced that the *ātman* is, by nature, free from the fetters of *karma*. The realisation of this foundational fact that the body is the battle-ground with good and evil as the contending forces and that it is the preponderance of the *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, that influences and determines this conflict, will lead to a correct appreciation of the place of *karma* in the scheme of moral life. From this follows the first formula of *Karma Yoga* which is stated as follows: *Act only on the knowledge that your action is influenced by* prakṛti *and the* guṇas. The self has nothing to do with the springs of action and its essential nature is not tainted by them. Not knowing this, the ignorant are attached to *karma*, being misled by the dispositions of *prakṛti*. But he who knows the truth about *karma* is unattached to it or to its consequences. His actions are not prompted by inclination or desire. Moral life consists in the giving up of egoistic, utilitarian and acquisitive instincts, *karmabhāva* and *kartṛbhāva*. *Kāmya karma* is the offspring of pathological love seated in the propulsions of sense and is, therefore, influenced by inclination. Reason counsels or commands the will to free itself from the ends of inclination and establish its inherent right of self-sovereignty or moral autonomy. The will, being essentially free, consents to obey the command, and this the cate-

gorical imperative of duty as formulated in the *Gītā* in the ever-memorable words :

karmaṇyevādhikāraste
mā phaleṣu kadācana |
mā karmaphalaheturbhūḥ
mā te saṅgostvakarmaṇi | | —ii. 47.

"In work alone lies thy duty, never in the fruits thereof. Do not work for the fruit ; nor should you desist from work."

In one word, the *Gītā* recommends the ideal of *niṣkāma karma,* of duty done for its own sake, not out of desire for, or attachment to, its consequences. No man can escape from *karma ;* but he must remember that his action is influenced by *prakṛti* and its *guṇas.* Action arises out of the dispositions of the body, and should not spring from the desires of the mind. *Kāmya karma* fetters the mind and fouls the spirit. *Niṣkāma karma* implies the necessity of acting from respect for the imperative of duty. It eliminates the influence of inclination and implies respect for the practical reason. Reason excludes all the sensuous springs of *rāga* and rejects the impetuous claims of *ahaṅkāra* (egoity). The imperative of duty is not dictated by hedonistic or utilitarian considerations, but is disinterested and categorical.

A true understanding of the nature of the self subjects the mechanism and motive of conduct to

a critical examination and makes the moral life truly intelligible. Such a critique of conduct instructed by reason develops into moral insight. From this point of view, the Socratic saying that virtue is knowledge becomes significant.

sarvam karmākhilam pārtha
jñāne parisamāpyate | —iv. 33.

Where the will is guided by reason as opposed to the ends of inclination, it is self-determined. Duty is determined by rational insight into the nature of the self, and then reason and activity are in perfect accord. The ideal inspires the actual and the actual stabilises the ideal. Knowledge and action are the obverse and the reverse of the same law of duty and represent its static and dynamic sides. Thus practical reason has a theoretical and a practical side and both point to the same truth. When this truth is perceived, *karma* ceases to be *karma*, for it does not cling to the doer. Then, the wise man sees action in inaction and inaction in action.

karmaṇyakaṙma yaḥ paśyet
akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ |
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu
sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt || —iv. 18.

Such *niṣkāma karma* is morality touched with the metaphysical knowledge that neither the roots of action nor its fruits pertain to the self. A person

endowed with such knowledge, single-minded in his devotion to the self, renouncing all motive dictated by self-interest, realises that *karma* is externally determined by the body as a mode of *prakṛti* and is no more deluded by the ancient confusion of the *ātman* with *deha* or body. He performs his actions giving up all attachment and his *karma* is burnt up in the fire of knowledge. In the performance of duty, the will is rationalised and the element of *jñāna* dominates over the conative or affective elements of the ethical situation. The moral philosopher knows that the *ātman* is essentially self-conscious, but that, owing to the causality of *karma*, it mistakes itself for the body and feels that it is the agent. But, really speaking, it is the conative and the cognitive senses and the bodily organism that do the work. The senses function in their specific way and the physical organism maintains itself. But, the self is different from the pseudo-self with its *prakṛti vāsanā* which is the real actor in the world of sense and sensibility. One who thus knows the true nature of the self and has realised it is not affected by *karma*.

ātmavantam na karmāṇi
nibadhnanti dhanañjaya | —iv. 41.

The theory of *niṣkāma karma* does not counsel renunciation of all activity. What is recommended

is not *karmatyāga* (renunciation of action) but *karmaphalatyāga* (renunciation of the fruit of action). The *Gītā* does not ordain absolute *inactivity*, but only insists on *unattached activity*; freedom *in* action and not *from* action. This conclusion is reinforced by the following considerations: In the cosmic operation of *karma*, no one can be still or inactive even for a moment. The ascetic who suppresses only his outer sense-activities without curbing and negating his internal desires is a hypocrite.* Likewise the pseudo-*sannyāsins* of the shirk-work, sour-grape and even starve-sense types only bring the holy order into contempt and serve to condemn and stultify themselves. Unhealthy repression and self-mortification often lead to violent reactions and reckless voluptuousness.† Moral activity is helpful even in the case of the contemplative *jñānī* who practises introversion (*jñāna niṣṭhā*) and seeks *s'ānti* by stilling the *vāsanās*. Desire for abstention from work is as much determined by the *guṇas* as the desire for work. Disciplined activity, far from being an impediment, may often be a corrective to the lapses of a purely contemplative life. *Karma Yoga* has always the three-fold advantage of naturalness, ease and efficacy. Even Janaka, who was a spe-

* iii. 6.

† iii. 33.

cialist in introversion and in *samādhi*, wore the crown with ease and lived for world-welfare. By doing his duty in a disinterested way, even the butcher in the blessed city of this royal sage acquired moral autonomy more truly than the ascetic in the forest who controlled the mind and yet cursed the crow. A true *Karma Yogin* may appear to be immersed in activity ; but he practises inner detachment. Like the water on the lotus leaf, he is in the world, but not of it. Even in *Jñāna Yoga* which insists on introversion, the *yogi* has to resort to *karma* in the interests of maintaining his body and its health. The duty of every man is determined psychologically by his *svabhāva* or inner disposition. If a *Kṣatriya* like Arjuna whose bent of mind is for righteous warfare abandons his duty, his impulsive asceticism is sure to react on him and lead to moral disaster. Even *Īśvara*, who is absolutely pure and perfect, employs Himself in activity and His will is immediately fulfilled in work for the redemption of the world. *Īs'vara* is ever pure and perfect ; He is *kartā* (the doer) and yet *akartā* (the non-doer). Even so, a wise man sees action in inaction and inaction in action. He who has specialised in the philosophy of action, the *kṛtsnavit*, knows that *jñāna* or *akarma* is an activity and that *karma* presupposes *jñāna*. Conation is rationalised and reason is conative. In this way

the *kṛtsnavit* knows all things and becomes a *kṛtsnakṛt* doing good things.

Niṣkāma karma is renunciation of *kāma* and not of *karma*, of the doer-mentality and not of the deed.

yasya sarve samārambhāḥ
kāmasaṅkalpavarjitāḥ | —iv. 19.

The actions of the sage are devoid of desire and self-will. He also gives up attachment to the fruit of works. Such a person, though ever engaged in work, does not work at all.

tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgam
nityatṛpto nirāśrayaḥ |
karmaṇyabhipravṛtto (a) pi
naiva kiñcit karoti saḥ || —iv. 20.

He knows that the roots of all his actions arise from the *anātman* and that their fruits belong to the *Paramātman*. The *karma* alone is performed without the desire for the fruit arising from it. *Niṣkāma karma* does not consist in mere conformity to a dogma which is fixed and formal. It is not simply *right* action, but *righteous* action regulated by reason and *śraddhā* or enquiring faith. Mere *karma* without the illumination of *jñāna* is blind and mechanical. It is like the human body without the head. Mere *jñāna* without the dynamic or moving power of *karma* is emptied of

content; it is like the head without the trunk. *Karma* supplies the content of conduct and *jñāna* determines the right attitude of doing work. *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* are not contradictory methods but are complementary like form and matter or like the universal and the particular.

sāṅkhya yogau pṛthak bālāḥ
pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ |
ekamapyāsthitas samyag
ubhayor vindate phalam || —v. 4.

And again

ekam sāṅkhyañ ca yogañ ca
yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati || —v. 5.

Sāṅkhya and *Yoga* form together the theory and practice of conduct. *Jñāna* is not abstract thought devoid of content, but is immanent in volitional activity and illumines its nature. *Karma* is the dynamic side of the moral law. When *kāmya karma* is given a new direction by the rational insight afforded by *jñāna*, it changes from prudential expediency to inner excellence. Then the violent warfare in the moral life between the "is" of sensibility and the "ought to be" of reason is reconciled by the concept of *niṣkāma karma*. In the history of this conflict, the "is" at first ousts the "ought" and the sensualist follows the propulsions of the sensitive self as a matter of course and enjoys

sense gratification. But the appetitive self thrives on desire and grows by what it feeds on. Its wants increase with satisfaction. In the second stage, there is a reaction on the side of ascetic suppression in which passion is sought to be eliminated by reason. The moral law excludes all sensible springs. But excessive inhibition is as ruinous to moral life as excessive impulsion. In the third stage, a reconciliation is effected between sensibility and reason by the formula of *niṣkāma karma*. *Karma* is the dynamic power of duty exalted by inner detachment.

This formula is applied to the three *Vedic karmas* of *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapas* (sacrifice, gift and austerity). *Yajña* or sacrifice is the essence of ethical life. The human body is moulded out of the cosmic stuff and is therefore, a microcosm or miniature cosmos. The constituents of the physical organism of the *jīva* are taken from the physical universe. The cell is reproduced from the parental life. Its food is gathered from the vegetable and the animal kingdom. Its mind stuff is derived from the cosmic source and presided over by the gods that perform functions assigned to them in maintaining the cosmic order. The self is a social being and cannot sustain itself without social help; it owes its moral and spiritual life to the grace of the *guru*. In this way, the cosmos is one single

organism or systematic unity in which there is no gap between atom, cell, sense, self and society. All these are interconnected and form a single universe as opposed to the multiverse of the pluralist. The main purpose of the universe is to be the vale of soul-making. It is the arena where salvation is sought and secured. But the empirical self with its acquisitive instinct of *ahaṅkāra* (egoism) has usurped the cosmic elements and made them its own. *Yajña* is only a grateful offering made by the *jīva* as the moral self to the universe for what it has received from it in its psycho-physical make-up. It is divided into *pitṛ yajña*, *deva yajña*, *bhūta yajña*, *nr yajña* and *Brahma yajña* or duties to ancestors, to the celestial world, to the material world, to society and to the *guru*. The conduct of the empirical self is determined by the *guṇas* and the *Gītā* describes the three-fold classification of *yajña*. *Tāmasa yajña* is the mechanical performance of sacrifice without faith in the *Vedic* imperative and without the will to give, and is, therefore, a self-regarding activity. It is an offering to the dark and malignant powers and not to the friendly gods that help the ethical purpose of the universe. *Rājasa yajña* is an offering to the lower gods with a view to obtaining recognition and reward and is characterised by ostentation. In *sāttvika* sacrifice, there is no bargain with the gods and

it is therefore disinterested duty and opposed to cosmic commerce with the gods. The *Gītā* insists on the performance of *yajña* as *niṣkāma karma.*

aphalā kānkṣibhir yajño
vidhi dṛṣṭo ya ijyate |
yaṣṭavyameveti manaḥ
samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ ||

abhisandhāya tu phalam
dambhārtham api caiva yat |
ijyate bharataśreṣṭha
tam yajñam viddhi rājasam ||

vidhihīnam asṛṣṭānnam
mantrahīnam adakṣiṇam
śraddhāvirahitam yajñam
tāmasam paricakṣate || —xvii. 11, 12, 13.

Dāna is charity or the practice of benevolence. In its *tāmasa* aspect, it is indiscriminate as it has no regard for the qualifications of the receiver or the nature of his specific requirements. *Rājasa dāna* is based on calculation and expectation of return; it is a gift for some consideration. *Sāttvika dāna* is beneficence done for the sake of duty and not from a desire for personal gratification. The left hand does not know what the right hand gives; yet, the gift is based on discrimination and is given to the man who deserves it and according to his needs. Of these three, the *sāttvika* type of gift alone is worthy of adoption.

dātavyam iti yad dānam
dīyate (a) nupakāriṇe |
deśe kāle ca pātre ca
taddānam sāttvikam smrtam ||

yattu pratyupakārārtham
phalam uddiśya vā punah |
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam
tad dānam rājasam smṛtam ||

adeśakāle yad dānam
apātrebhyaś ca dīyate |
asatkṛtam avajñātam
tat tāmasam udāhrtam || —xvii. 20, 21, 22.

Tapas is the need for the ethical purification and perfection of the individual in thought, word and deed (*manas*, *vāk*, *kāya*). It is also three-fold, *tāmasa*, *rājasa* and *sāttvika*. *Tāmasa tapas* is rooted in stupidity, ignorance and perversity and involves injury to one's self. *Rājasa* penance is for personal glorification and is achieved by self-mortification and infliction of injury on others. The seeker after *siddhi* is not satisfied with worldly gains, but aspires for celestial greatness and glory. *Sāttvika tapas* is a process of self-discipline in thought, word and deed. Physically, it connotes the practice of bodily purity or continence, *ahimsā* and reverence for holy men. Speech is truthful and polite, *satya* and *priya*. The control of the mind consists of freedom from anger, self-restraint and self-knowledge and the desire for universal welfare.

devadvijaguruprājña—
pūjanam śaucam ārjavam |
brahmacaryam ahimsā ca
śārīram tapa ucyate ||

anudvegakaram vākyam
satyam priyahitam ca yat |
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva
vāṅmayam tapa ucyate ||

manaḥ prasādas saumyatvam
maunam ātmavinigrahaḥ |
bhāvasamśuddhir ityetat
tapo mānasam ucyate ||

śraddhayā parayā taptam
tapas tat trividham naraiḥ |
aphalākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ
sāttvikam paricakṣate ||

satkāra māna pujārtham
tapo dambhena caiva yat |
kriyate tad iha proktam
rājasam calam adhruvam ||

mūḍhagrāheṇātmano yat
pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ |
parasyotsādanārtham vā
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam || —xvii. 14 to 19.

The *Gītā* thus describes the three psychological distinctions in each of the three duties, *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapas* and extols the *sāttvika* type as the only righteous course of action.

The moral situation in the *Gītā* which furnishes the occasion for this ethical teaching is the dilemma in which Arjuna was placed in the battle, in the conflict between *ahimsā* and warfare. The pacifist is shocked by the disastrous consequences of war, righteous or unrighteous, points to its paralysing and demoralising effect and hopes for the millennium when *ahimsā* will be the order of the day. The militarist takes his stand on the pugnacious or warring instinct of man which makes for self-preservation and, contending that might alone preserves right, advocates war as the solvent of all disputes. But both pacifism and militarism are extreme theories. The first is desirable, but not possible; the second is possible but not desirable.

Ethics, however, insists on localising warfare and not totalising it. The *tāmasa* warrior indulges in fighting even non-combatants and kills others for the mere joy of destruction without any discrimination or regard for the rules of warfare. The *rājasa* warrior is actuated by ambition and love of renown. His is the *digvijaya* or world-conquest mentality glorying in conquests. The *sāttvika* warrior ought to engage himself in righteous warfare without any feeling of vindictive cruelty or thought of the consequences.

dharmyāddhi yuddhāc chreyo (a) nyat
kṣatriyasya na vidyate | —ii. 31.

To a *Kṣatriya* there is no higher good than righteous warfare. And, says the Lord :

atha cet tvam imam dharmyam
saṅgrāmam na kariṣyasi |
tatas svadharmam kīrtiñ ca
hitvā pāpam avāpsyasi | | —ii. 33.

Arjuna is a *Kṣatriya* both by temperament and by training and cannot shirk his duty to fight in a righteous cause by taking to *sannyāsa*. He has his own station in life by reason of his *varṇa* and ought to perform the duties that pertain to that station.

svadharme nidhanam śreyaḥ
paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ | —iii. 35.

But he must do it in a spirit of disinterestedness. The conviction that the *ātman* is eternal and the body ephemeral ought to give him the invincible courage that coolly faces death and also the inevitable consolation that warriors that die in battle die by their own choice and that they are only physically mortal. It is really a case of *niṣkāma karma* when a true *Kṣatriya* fights for a just cause, not because it excites his instinct or is expedient, but because it ought to be done as duty. The *Gītā* thus expounds the general principles of *niṣkāma karma* and expects every man to apply it to particular cases with the rational insight given by *sāṅkhya buddhi*, but without any sophistry or casuistic dialectic. It insists on the inner worth of action emptied of the subjective inclination of *kāma*

or *rāga* and the objective ideas of utility and love of honour. The dualism between pleasure and pain, success and failure, therefore, does not enter into the content of the moral imperative. The mind is thus disciplined and well-balanced and acquires an attitude of *samatva* or equipoise which is the consummation of all moral endeavour. The moral self is no longer the slave of sensibility (*kāma, krodha, rāga* and *dveṣa*), but has attained self-sovereignty or moral autonomy (*jitātmā*). This view of duty avoids the perils of hedonism and intellectualism and effectively bridges the gulf between the two *Mīmāmsās.*

kāyena manasā buddhyā
kevalair indriyair api |
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti
saṅgam tyaktvātmaśuddhaye || —v. 11.

The advantages that follow from the performance of duty as *niṣkāma karma* may be briefly summarised. While *kāmya karma* makes man the creature of sensibility and environment, the imperative of morality as disinterested duty has its own intrinsic values of dignity, purity and sublimity. *Kāmya karma* has only market or commercial value and makes man the slave of passion and of the propulsions of the senses. But the moral law fosters self-sovereignty (*jitendriyatva*) by purifying the motive of conduct and raises man from animality to

true humanity. *Niṣkāma karma* shines like a jewel in its own light. The *karma yogin* is not elated by success nor depressed by failure, but enjoys mental equanimity. Neither the utility of an act nor its futility can affect the good will and its disinterestedness. This attitude of *samatva* (equanimity) is stated to be the differentium of *yoga*.

siddhyasiddhyos samo bhūtvā
samatvam yoga ucyate |

The *yogin* realises the spiritual kinship of all selves and his attitude is opposed to the exclusive feeling of the pseudo-self. His action is a good in itself and not a means to something else. It is a universal law that will hold good for all rational beings on account of the similarity of their intelligence or *jñāna*. The imperative is emptied of the empirical feelings of *kāma* and *krodha* and is, hence, worthy of reverence. *Karma Yoga* is preferable to *Jñāna Yoga* owing to its ease, naturalness and efficacy. The *yogin* who does his work disinterestedly is not tainted by evil and is like the lotus leaf that sprouts in water, but is unaffected by it :

brahmaṇyādhāya karmāṇi
saṅgam tyaktvā karoti yaḥ |
lipyate na sa pāpena
padmapatram ivāmbhasā || —v. 10.

Such a *karma yogin* is ever contented (*nitya-tṛptaḥ*), devoid of all sensuous desire (*nirās'īḥ*) and full of humility (*nirmamaḥ*).

CHAPTER V

TRANSITION FROM THE ETHICS OF *NIṢKĀMA KARMA* TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SELF OR *ĀTMAN*

THE metaphysic of morals dealing with *niṣkāma karma* is only a negative account of duty and has to be reinterpreted in terms of the philosophy of the spirit. *Niṣkāma karma* is conduct freed from the stain of *kāma* and *rāga*, but it is not an end in itself. The good will or practical reason on which it is based is *a priori* and formal, as it is abstracted from contingent experience. Being only a negation of *kāmya karma*, it does not provide any basis for spiritual insight. It is duty done for the sake of duty and its authority is derived from respect for the moral law. It is opposed to the pleasant and the useful and is independent of the spurious motives drawn from sensibility. But freedom is not merely a negative concept; it means not only freedom *from*, but also *towards*. The moral 'ought' implies a deeper 'is' as it is 'being good' that determines 'doing good.' *Karma* or conduct is a particular expression of character which is the habitual way in which a man acts, and the act reveals his attitude. Character is itself different from the self which lives in a

habitual universe, and it is the problem of spiritual philosophy to enquire into the nature of the *puruṣa* or *ātman* and determine not only what a man ought to *do*, but also what a man ought to *be*. *Doing* good is on the whole an external point of view, but *being* good is self-determined and indicates the inner excellence of life. Thus understood, ethical philosophy acquires a new meaning. The principle of conduct does not consist merely in dissociation from *prakṛti* and self-determination; it is founded on the positive truths of the philosophy of the spirit and self-realisation. Moral consciousness presupposes the existence and eternity of the noumenal self or *ātmā* as distinguished from the phenomenalised *jīva* or *dehātmā* which is a mode of *prakṛti* or matter and becomes the slave of sensibility. When the true *karma yogin* sheds his *ahaṅkāra* or egoism and seeks to know his true *aham*, he develops into the *jñāna yogin*. *Jñāna* expounds the method by which the *ātman* tries to free itself from the confusions of *avidyā* and the distractions of *karma* by self-knowledge and self-purification.

The transition from the stage of *niṣkāma karma* to the ideal of self-realisation is a gradual ascent from moral freedom to spiritual spontaneity. The moral man deliberates on possible alternatives in a conflict of desires and then arrives at a decision. By his *buddhi* he distinguishes between the *ātman*

and its body and knows that the *ātman* is *apariṇāmī*, free from the mutations of matter, *avināśī*, the immortal self distinct from the perishing embodied self, and *pramātā* or subject of experience different from the non-self or *acit*. When *buddhi* is well disciplined, it develops into *vyavasāyātmikā buddhi*, in which the distractions of *viṣaya kāma* and moral particularism are replaced by the one-pointed aim of *mokṣa kāma* or the desire for *mukti*. When the moral consciousness of the *yogī* is definitely determined and becomes steadfast, he grows into a *sthita prajña* and is on the road to self-realisation. He is well established in *jñāna niṣṭhā* or the process of introversion by a reflective analysis of the *ātman* and its distinction from the *anātman*. The obstacles to *Jñāna Yoga* are traceable to the complex of *avidyā-kāma-karma*. *Avidyā* makes the *jīva* forget its spiritual nature and stains its self-effulgence. It leads to *deha abhimāna* arising from the false identification of the *ātman* with *prakṛti*. *Abhimāna* generates *kāma* or desire for the objects of sense and impels the *jīva* to *karma* or ethical action. *Karma* fetters the self and implicates it in the see-saw of metampsychosis. The *mumukṣu* realises the follies and evils of this downward course, retraces his steps and gradually ascends to spirituality by abandoning *kāmya karma*. Practising *niṣkāma karma*, he transfigures *viṣaya kāma*

into *ātma kāma* and, by his moral insight, overcomes the confusions of *avidyā*. Moral and spiritual ascent is steep and slippery ; but, owing to the freedom which the mind has to arrest the *vāsanās* and attain *mukti*, the *yogic* contemplative exercises the will to know his self by focussing it on the object.

This *yogic* endeavour admits of four definite and progressive stages which are known as *yatamāna samjña, vyatireka samjña, ekendriya samjña* and *vas'īkāra samjña. Yatamāna samjña** is the gradual withdrawal of the mind from functioning on the sense-plane and from its allurements and the concentration of it on the self or *ātman*. It is the process by which the attitude of inwardness is acquired by arresting or inhibiting the outgoing tendencies of the mind. *Vyatireka samjña*† is the inner control of the mind by the exercise of the spirit of detachment or *udāsīnatva* and freedom from elation and depression. Sudden repression may lead to violent reaction and therefore the mind should only gradually be turned to reach this level. But these methods do not take into account the *vāsanās* imbedded in the deeper layers of the mind. *Ekendriya samjña*‡ attempts to unroot the original propensi-

* ii. 58.
† ii. 57.
‡ ii. 56.

ties to ignorance and to evil (*anādi avidyā karma vāsanā*) by concentration on the nature of the self as the centre of serenity and stability. The mind is gently drawn from its materialistic consciousness by stilling the *vāsanās* by thinking them away and has the anticipatory satisfaction of self-realisation. But, even this stage is negative as ignorance and evil remain therein as a real possibility. So, in the fourth stage of *vaśīkāra samjña*,* self-renunciation or *vairāgya* is followed by self-realisation or *ātmā-valokana*. The *puruṣa* no longer deludes itself as a mode of *prakṛti*, but returns to itself. It is now a *self* and not a depersonalised process. It now shines in its own effulgence and has intrinsic joy. It is not *indriyārāma* but *ātmārāma*. The pleasures which the empirical self derives by its external possessions are ephemeral and perishing ; but, the self-satisfaction which accompanies the knowledge of the self has eternal value.

The self may be defined negatively by the refutation of the theories which explain it in terms of matter, life, mind and reason, and positively as the spiritual entity that shines for ever by his own effulgence. The physical philosopher or the *Dehātmavādin* describes it as an epiphenomenon or as an assemblage of atoms. But matter has no

* ii. 55.

life or consciousness and does not reflect on itself. The *Prāṇātmavādin* defines the self as life or vital impulse that has inner activity and the power of multiplying itself; but consciousness cannot evolve out of life. Therefore the *Indriyātmavādin* or sensationalist explains it as a cluster of sensations; but no sensation is self-conscious or conscious of unity. The *Antaḥkaraṇavādin* or mentalist defines it as a psychic continuum; but the *ātman* or the 'I' is different from the empirical 'me'. The rationalist defines the self as a rational being; but reason does not exhaust the spiritual consciousness. The *ātman* is different from the physical and the mental processes and from *jñāna* and is not only metaphysical but metapsychical; it is eternal and immutable and persists in all states of consciousness. The terms 'soul, 'spirit', 'self', 'individuality' and 'personality' do not bring out the full meaning of the word '*ātman*' which can be only experienced and not defined. Its experience is not inferred, but directly intuited. This intuition presupposes moral and spiritual discipline, and *Jñāna Yoga* is the process of discrimination (*viveka*) and dissociation (*vairāgya*). It consists in the intellectual discernment that the *ātman* is not the body, the senses or the mind, involves the emotional discipline leading to *vairāgya* and leads to the attainment of moral and spiritual autonomy.

The *jñānī* who has achieved this self-realisation adopts the following dictum of the moral law in the manifold details of his daily life and conduct. It may be called the second of the ethical imperatives : "Know that you are the *ātman* or self and not the body or mode of *prakṛti* and that other beings are also selves." This consciousness enables man to form a correct estimate of the nature and function of action in moral life, divests him of attachment to *karma* and its fruits and frees him from the taint incidental to it. Realising his true nature as a *puruṣa*, he ceases to be the victim of the forces of *prakṛti* and attains autonomy and self-mastery. When he knows that other individuals also are *puruṣas* like himself, he comes to appreciate and respect their personality and learns to look on them not as means for the gratification of his own purposes, but as entities endowed with an individuality similar to his and pervaded by the same supreme and universal Spirit in which all beings abide.

The *ātman* has intrinsic worth and is to be looked upon as a person and not as a thing. Humanity should be treated as an end in itself and never as a means to an end. The *ātman* is free from the pairs of opposites and returns to itself by reflecting on its own self-effulgent nature. In terms of the spiritual philosophy of the *ātman*, *yajña* is the sacrifice

of egoism in the fire of *jñāna*. *Dāna* is the social virtue of perceiving the similarity of all persons as *ātman* and not as things made of *prakṛti*. *Tapas* is the practice of self-purification in thought, word and deed and connotes the spiritual habit of inwardness acquired by ceaseless thinking on thought itself. Self-knowledge is not a process of logical abstraction and mere self-renunciation, but connotes the supremacy of soul-power over brute force and the might of reason. Self-sovereignty or spiritual autonomy acquired by *jñāna* transcends the values of economic gain, political power and even the might of *devaloka*.

Jñāna Yoga culminates in the consciousness of unity among the infinite variety of living beings, in their sub-human, human and celestial embodiments. The *Gītā* analyses four stages of soul culture in the ascending order of their valuation. In the first stage called *sarvatra samadarśana*, the *yogī* who has intuited his *ātman* sees a similar self in all selves owing to the affinity and unity of their attributive spiritual consciousness.

sarvabhūtastham ātmānam
sarva bhūtāni cātmani |
ikṣate yogayuktātmā
sarvatra samadarśanaḥ || —vi. 29.

Yajñadatta that is in the body of a dog is similar to Devadatta that dwells in a celestial body. It is

the karma-ridden bodily tenement that obscures the spiritual vision and distinguishes one *jīva* from another. But, to a man with *ātma dṛṣṭi* or spiritual consciousness, all *jīvas* are alike.

vidyā vinaya sampanne
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini |
śuni caiva śvapāke ca
paṇditās samadarśinaḥ || —v. 18.

By renunciation (*vairāgya*) and inwardness (*jñāna niṣṭhā*), the man of true culture attains the spiritual quality of sweet reasonableness. But the divine consciousness which is the real bond of unity is not yet discernible in this state. In the second stage known as divine *sāmya*, the *yogī* visualises in a spiritual way the similarity of the pure *ātman* to the Lord and thus he perceives God in all *jīvas* and all *jīvas* in God.

yo mām paśyati sarvatra
sarvañ ca mayi paśyati | —vi. 30.

In the third stage, such similarity is perceived even when the *yogī* is not practising introversion. The fourth stage of *yoga* is its practical application to the exercise of disinterested love to all beings in their joys and sorrows.

ātmaupamyena sarvatra
samam paśyati yo (a) rjuna |
sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham
sa yogī paramo mataḥ || —vi. 32.

The practice of *Jñāna Yoga* or the way of illumination presupposes a scheme of physical and mental discipline which is expounded in the sixth chapter of the *Gītā*. The *yogī* as *jitātmā* who has attained self-conquest should subdue the *dvandvas* or pairs of opposites like heat and cold and his mind should not be affected by environmental changes and affective states of pleasure and pain. The economic values of property and wealth should have no attraction for him as they pertain to the earthbound self and not to the *puruṣa*. He should be indifferent whether a thing of *prakṛti* is dust or diamond.

jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya
paramātmā samāhitaḥ |
śītoṣṇa sukha duḥkheṣu
tathā mānāpamānayoḥ ||

jñāna vijñāna tṛptātmā
kūṭastho vijitendriyaḥ |
yukta ityucyate yogī
samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ || —vi. 7, 8.

In practising spiritual kinship, he rises above the social distinctions due to birth, sex, rank and character. He has, therefore, no friend or foe, no relative or stranger; nor does he recognise the ethical distinctions between a good man and a wicked man as all *jīvas* are essentially good.

suhṛnmitrāryudāsīna
madhyasthadveṣyabandhuṣu |

sādhuṣvapica pāpeṣu
samabuddhir viśiṣyate || —vi. 9.

Equipped with these disciplines, the *yogī* should select a clean and solitary place and retire into the "cell of self-knowledge" and concentrate on the *ātman* without mental distractions. When the mind is thus focussed on the *ātman* in comporting with the rules of *Ātma Yoga* and the unified mind is turned inward, the thoughts that distract the mind and make it restless are thought away by ceaseless practice and with a spirit of renunciation.* The verb "to have" should be deleted from the grammar of *Jñāna Yoga* and all lust and love of the baser sort which is the very food of I-hood should be destroyed.

The practice of *Jñāna Yoga* involves many factors. First comes *yama* which consists in the cultivation of the five virtues known as *aparigraha* (non-possession), *asteya* (non-stealing), *satya* (truthfulness), *brahmacarya* (continence) and *ahimsā* (non-violence). Next comes *niyama*, which includes meditation on the meaning of the *Vedāntic* texts, *śauca* (self-purification), *santoṣa* (contentment) and *tapas* (austerity). *Prāṇāyāma* is breath control leading to the control of the *prāṇa*. *Pratyāhāra* is the process of arresting the outgoing activities of the senses. *Dhāraṇā* is the fixing of the

* vi. 35.

mind on the subject of introversion. *Samādhi* is the direct realisation of the *ātman* and the consummation of moral and spiritual endeavour contained in *dhyāna* and *dhāraṇā*. Faith is then fulfilled in soul-sight. The highest ideal of the *yogic* process is self-realisation or *Brahma nirvāṇa* preceded by a stripping of *ahaṅkāra* (egoism).

yogi yuñjīta satatam
atmānam rahasi sthitaḥ |
ekākī yatacittātmā
nirāśīr aparigrahaḥ ||

śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya
sthiram āsanam ātmanaḥ |
nātyucchritam nātinīcam
cailājinakuśottaram ||

tatraikāgram manaḥ kṛtvā
yatacittendriyakriyaḥ |
upaviśyāsane yuñjyād
yogam ātma viśuddhaye || —vi. 10, 11, 12.

The mind of the *yogī* who has stilled his outgoing desires and focussed his attention on the *ātman* is like the unflickering light of the lamp.

yathā dīpo nivātastho
neṅgate sopamā smṛtā |
yogino yatacittasya
yuñjato yogam ātmanaḥ || —vi. 19.

The spiritual philosopher who seeks to know the *ātman* is an *ārurukṣu* and he becomes the *ārūḍha* when he intuits himself. While the knowledge of

the *ātman* in *Jñāna Yoga* is mediate, in *ātmāvalokana* it is an immediate intuition. The existence of the *ātman* is thus proved by directly experiencing it. The *ātman* thus attains its stirless serene consciousness or *kaivalya* by complete dissociation from the shackles of sensibility. It has won its true freedom from the causal chain of *karma* and enjoys eternal felicity (*nitya tṛpti*).

yatroparamate cittam
niruddham yogasevayā |
yatra caivātmanātmānam
paśyannātmani tuṣyati | | —vi. 20.

The joy of self-realisation has an intrinsic and eternal value unlike the sense-pleasures fraught with pain and frustration. There is no happiness in the world or in *Svarga* which is good without qualification, except *ātma sukha*. Freed from the distractions of *kāma* or sensual desires and the confusions of *avidyā*, the *yogī* attains *s'ānti*, the inner peace that passeth all understanding and the sinless stirless state of *Brahma nirvāna* or *ātmāvalokana* described as "the flight of the alone to the alone" A desire may be externally determined like *bāhya viṣaya kāma* (love of external objects) and have a peripheral origin ; or, it may be centrally originated in the individual himself (*saṅkalpaja*) like the inner attachments that enchain the self. Physical pains and sorrows caused by men or things should

be endured with fortitude. Mental pains should be entirely subdued as the *ātman* is essentially blissful without even a shadow of pain or suffering. The *yogī* who conquers *rajas* by *sattva* and has *pras'ānta manas* (serenity of mind), intuits he *ātman* and is thus free from the fetters of senses and transcends the influence of all *guṇas*. He is the true *paṇḍita* and discerns and intuits the *ātman*, realising the spiritual kinship and unity of all *jīvas*. His knowledge (*vidyā*) that the *ātman* is different from the spurious self of *prakṛti* ripens into *vinaya* and sweet reasonableness. The illumined self sees a similar self in all beings owing to the similarity of their *jñāna* and makes no difference between a god and a dog. Having subdued the ills of *samsāra*, he is self-satisfied (*ātmārāmaḥ*). The dross of *karma* is consumed away by the fire of *jñāna*.* All activity is swallowed up in the intuition of *ātmāvalokana*. He delights in benevolence to all beings (*sarva bhūta hite rataḥ*) as in removing their poverty, disease, illiteracy and ignorance. Thus equipped with the negative virtues of the renunciation of the sense of *ahankāra* and the conquest of the *tāmasa* and *rājasa* instincts of pugnacity, fear, anger, acquisitiveness and sex and with the positive virtues of inwardness, *vijñāna* and *vinaya*, he

* iv. 19.

attains *Brahma nirvāna* and devotes himself to beneficent activity.

labhante brahmanirvāṇam
ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ |
chinnadvaidhā yatatmānaḥ
sarvabhūta hite ratāḥ || —v. 25.

To the *kevalin*, seeking God is only a means to his seeing the self. He attains the spiritual freedom which arises from a sense of dissociation from *prakṛti* and dependence on the cosmic Ruler. The quiet of *kaivalya*, however, often leads to quietism and subjectivism and the *kevala* is stranded in solid singleness without the glow of godliness, though he is freed from the ills of *samsāra*. His spiritual attainment gives only a negative quiet and not positive union with the divine and is, at best, a half-way house to the perfection of *mukti*. As regards the value of *kaivalya*, one school maintains the view that *kaivalya* is not on the road to *mukti*, but is *mukti* itself in which the *mukta* enjoys supreme peace. Another school favours the theory that the *kevala* is on the path to perfection and will eventually reach the divine goal. The path of devotion leads to God and not away from Him, and the instinct which the *kevala* has for the Infinite soon asserts itself and urges him to shed his sinfulness arising from self-satisfaction and self-alienation. He is on the right path in so far as he has discrimi-

nated between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, freed himself from the shackles of *prakṛti* and turned his attention Godward. The *kevala* is transformed into the *jñānī*, hungers for God and attains the bliss of immortal communion with Him. The scope and value of this religious realisation form the subject-matter of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSITION FROM THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE SPIRIT TO THAT OF RELIGION

THE theory of *niṣkāma karma* establishes the nature of right conduct *a priori* by self-legislating reason or *buddhi* which excludes the empirical determination of *prakṛti* and the *guṇas* or necessitation from without. But this definition of duty as self-consistency with *buddhi* is formal and negative; it should lead to the more fruitful and concrete idea of consistency with the self or *puruṣa*. The Kantian view of the moral imperative based on the distinction between reason and feeling and persons and things is very suggestive; but it suffers from excessive formalism owing to the opposition it creates between reason and sensibility and its abstract conception of personality and the kingdom of ends. Though it tends to rationalise and socialise conduct, it has no clear idea of the nature of the self and it ignores the vital relation between ethics and religion. This defect is more clearly discernible in the *Sāṅkhyan* theory of morals on account of the absolute distinction it makes between the *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and its failure to solve the dualism between the two. The *Gītā* view of *Puruṣottama* as the inner Self of all persons or *puruṣas* remedies the fatal defects of the meta-

physic of morals ending in deism and the rational view of conduct leading to quietism. When moral consciousness fills up in meaning, it is enriched by the idea of spiritual realisation and acquires a new orientation in the religious ideal of duty as a means to self-realisation.

The first six chapters of the *Gītā* deal with the rationalisation and spiritualisation of conduct as the means to the goal of religious consciousness which is treated in the next six chapters. The *ātman* is immutable and eternal though, owing to *avidyā-karma*, it permits itself to be moulded by matter and its mutations. *Dehas* vary and vanish, but the *dehin* or *ātman* is immortal and eternal. Self-knowledge is attained by *Jñāna Yoga* and by the disinterested performance of duty without subjective inclinations and utilitarian ideas. *Karma* is rationalised by *jñāna* and *jñāna* is vitalised by *karma* and there is action in inaction and inaction in action;* and *Jñāna Yoga* has its fruition in self-realisation or *ātmāvalokana*. Self-purification and self-knowledge are only stepping stones to *mukti* and not stopping places and the next six chapters expound the way in which ethical endeavour and spirituality have their fruition in the philosophy of religion. Reason demands categorically the disinterested performance of duty, and the philosophy

* iv. 18.

of the self insists on the need for the knowledge of the self as different from the psycho-physical configuration. But it is only the philosophy of religion or *parā vidyā* that gives a meaning to the system of nature or *avyakta* and to the eternal values of the self or *akṣara*, like truth, goodness and beauty. The *yogī* or the *jñānī*, who seeks *Paramapuruṣa*, the Self that abides in all beings, is no longer ego-centric, but shifts his centre to God and becomes theo-centric.

vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapassu caiva
dāneṣu yat puṇya phalam pradiṣṭam |
atyeti tat sarvam idam viditvā
yogī param sthānam upaiti cādyam || —viii. 28.

The nature of Brahman and the appreciation of the transvaluation of values as expounded in the second *ṣaṭka* may briefly be expounded in the light of the philosophy of religion. The Absolute of philosophy or Brahman is the God of religion or *Puruṣottama* and is logically the Highest, ethically the Best and aesthetically the most Beautiful. From the standpoint of ontology, Brahman is *satyam*, *Jñānam* and *anantam*; it is real Reality in which all thinking things and objects of thought live, move and have their being. Brahman is the ultimate subject of all knowledge and transcends the subject-object relation arising from that between the *jīva*, the subject of experience, and *prakrti* or *kṣetra*, the object of experience. It is the infinite

that is rooted in the finite and transcends its finitude and is the Eternal of eternals. Cosmology expounds Brahman as the first cause of all beings and the final cause of all sentient experience. All beings merge into the *sat* in *pralaya* and emerge from it in *sṛṣṭi*. The All-Self or Vāsudeva is immanent in the world and at the same time eminent. The ethical quality of Brahman refers to His transcendental purity and perfection. All beings rest in Him, but He does not rest in them.* From the religious standpoint Brahman is the *s'arīrin* that sustains the *jīva*, rules it from within and makes it a means to His satisfaction. He is closer to life than breathing and is yet transcendentally holy. He is the world-ground as well as the spiritual goal of life and by attaining Brahman the *jñāni* attains the highest end of life. In this way Brahman, the Absolute of philosophy, as the all-inclusive unity, becomes the supra-personal *Īs'vara* or *Puruṣottama* and the claims of monistic thought and ethical religion are reconciled.

The chief idea of ethical religion is the definition of *Īs'vara* as Ruler and Redeemer. He is not an extra-cosmic designer that creates the world by His omnipotence and lets it go ; nor is He an indifferent spectator or eternal dreamer, but is the One without a second that wills the many, becomes the

* ix. 4.

manifold and enters into the world of *cit-acit* as its Inner Ruler Immortal. The omnipotence of *Īs'vara* is self-limited by His righteousness and, though He is the real actor in the universe, He is not touched or tainted by the errors, evils and imperfections of life. The existence of evil and unmerited suffering may not be casually explained; but it cannot be traced to divine arbitrariness and cruelty. The responsibility rests primarily on the freedom of the finite self and *Īs'vara* as the righteous ruler of the world metes out justice according to the deserts of the individual or his *karma*. Goodness and godliness are indistinguishable as God is *satyakāma* and *satyasaṅkalpa* and His will, unlike human purposes, is immediately self-realised. *Īsvara* is not only the benign Providence, the giver of all goods satisfying all our wants, but is also the all-Destroyer. When evil multiplies itself by annihilating virtue and threatens the moral order of the world, retribution on a cosmic scale becomes inevitable and death is the wages of wickedness and sin. In moments of moral crisis in history when vice tyrannises over virtue and seeks to enthrone itself in its place, the Lord of righteousness incarnates into the world with a view to punishing the evil-doer, redeeming him from his career of wickedness and re-establishing the reign of righteousness.

paritrāṇāya sādhūnām
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām |
dharma samsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge | | —iv. 8.

The *Gītā* view of the *avatāras* is the master-thought of ethical religion; but its unique value is misunderstood by hostile critics and explained away by some of its followers and admirers. The historicity of Kṛṣṇa is doubted and denied by the former and the *avatāra* is regarded as the creation of the poetic or *purāṇic* imagination. The historic view accepts the fact of the *avaṭāras*, but denies their miraculous origin and explains their birth and death as the normal facts of human experience. Others trace the story of the *avatāras* to the ethics of evolution and relate them to the onward march of the world. Still others deny the divinity of the *avatāras* and treat them as liberated souls born to serve others as exemplars of humanity. The *Vedāntic* monist rejects the anthropomorphic view of the descent of viṣṇu from *Vaikuṇṭha* and expounds the *avatāra* as an extraordinary manifestation of life and holds that every man can become an *avatāra* or *yogīs'vara*. There is really no distinction between the pillar and *Puruṣottama* though they mark the beginning and the end of the evolutionary series. When the believer is assailed by historic and philosophic criticism, he takes

refuge in allegory and thinks of the *avatāra* as the higher mind or *ātman* battling with the lower and conquering it. One other explanation consists in showing the self-contradictions of the finite-infinite involved in the *avatāra* concept and tracing it to the conjoint effect of reality and *māyā* and the defect inherent in the conceptual reading of the Absolute. The *avatāra* is mortal like all men and is only an illusory appearance of Brahman.

The theory of divine incarnation is the basic concept of theism regarded as ethical religion or the religion of redemption and should be expounded only in the light of its central teaching. The condemnation of the *avatāra* by the hostile critic is due to prejudice deepening into hatred. 'Foolish people fancy me to be a man, ignoring my transcendent nature.'

avajānanti mām mūḍhāḥ
mānuṣīm tanum āśritam |
param bhāvam ajānantaḥ
mama bhūtamaheśvaram || —ix. 11.

The scientist who relies on the evidence of sense-perception rejects the supernaturalistic account of the *avatāras*; but his view is partial and fragmentary. History narrates human events in their temporal order and does not refer to the eternal that is in the temporal and beyond it. The absolutist who traces the worship of the *avatāra* to

the theistic needs of the popular consciousness should, strictly speaking, reject theism altogether and give up the attitude of condescension. The theory of incarnation is opposed to anthropomorphism, the evolutionistic view and illusionism, when it morally explains the *avatāra* as the descent of divine righteousness into history in moments of moral crisis to punish the wicked and enthrone justice. The religious motive is more exalting, as it regards the incarnation of God as the invasion of His redemptive grace with a view to reclaiming the sinner from his career of sinfulness. But the most inspiring account is given by mysticism. When it discloses the supreme secret of the *avatāra* as the downpour of divine love into the heart of humanity and the yearning of the Lord of love to commune with the *jñānī* as His very self* and thus satisfy His soul-hunger. Though Brahman is beyond *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* and is *nirguṇa* and *niravayava*, He, as Bhagavān S'ri Kṛṣṇa, assumes by His *māyā* a transcendental form of beauty with a view to captivating humanity and ravishing the seeker out of his fleshly feeling and transmuting the *jīva* into His blissful nature.

The *Gītā* gives a new meaning to the complex of *avidyā-kāma-karma* in the light of ethical religion, which may briefly be defined and illustrated.

* vii. 18.

Jñāna is no longer *viṣaya jñāna* or *ātma jñāna*, but has reference to *Brahma jñāna*. Empiricism gives place to spiritual knowledge and finally to the knowledge of the Supreme Self. *Viṣaya kāma* is transfigured into *ātma kāma* and finally into *Bhagavat kāṃa*. Likewise *kāmya karma* is transformed into *niṣkāma karma* and then into *kaiṅkarya*. Work is changed into the worship of God. In this way, the psychic activities with their factors of cognition, feeling and conation are at first spiritualised and then divinised. The subject of every thought is not only the self, but its inner Source; the real actor in every moral situation is not merely the *jīva*, but *Īs'vara*; and every emotion like fear, anger and sex loses its sting by being spiritualised and given a Godward direction. Duty is divine command addressed to the moral and spiritual consciousness and is performed as consecrated service. The formula of duty from the religious standpoint is stated as follows:

"Regard all your actions as determined by *Bhagavān* or God as the ultimate subject or *kartā*."

mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi
sannyasyādhyātmacetasā |
nirāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā
yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ || —iii. 30.

The finite self has the moral freedom to attain sovereignty over its empirical nature by subduing

its animal inclinations and controlling its conative apparatus. But the real actor in the universe is *Īs'vara*, the inner controller of the self, and the *bhakta* feels and acts as the willing instrument of the divine will. The classical instances considered by the *Gītā* are reinterpreted in terms of this new formula. Sāttvika *yajñā* is the offering of *karma* to the Lord as *Brahmārpaṇa* without bargaining for boons and seeking self-glorification. *Tapas* is likewise the adoration of *Paramapuruṣa* in a spirit of utter humility and meekness. *Dāna* is benevolence without the expectation of any gain and is ultimately self-gift to the Supreme Lord who is the real self of all beings. The supreme motive of conduct in all cases is the dedication of every act to *Paramātman*. Initiated into this supreme knowledge, Arjuna receives a new inspiration for righteous warfare by attuning his will to the divine will. A true warrior fights knowing fully that the moral and spiritual order of the universe is ordained by a Being of infinite benevolence working for universal redemption. Arjuna is a *Kṣatriya* by birth and breeding and has invincible courage, and his duty is to fight his righteous battle in the field of Kurukṣetra which is also the *dharmakṣetra*, the vale of soul-making, by surrendering his will to the divine end.

tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyam samrddham |
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvameva
nimittamātram bhava savyasācin || —xi. 33.

Human personality is not an end in itself as its freedom is determined by its past life and the will of God. This does not mean that the self drifts between destiny and divinity without any initiative of its own. The empirical self is, no doubt, caught up in the dilemma of determinism and is unable to extricate itself from the evils of fatalism on the one hand and divine determinism on the other. While science depersonalises man and makes him the slave of causality, religion reduces him to the position of a conduit pipe and makes him the passive instrument of divine omnipotence. But ethics is founded on the freedom of the self and no power on earth or in the celestial world can conquer a man who has conquered his lower self and attained moral *svarāj*. Ethical religion reconciles the dualism between human and divine freedom by the idea that man may attain mastery over his lower self in order that his true self may be attuned to the will of God who is the real Self or Creator of creators. Freedom is a real possibility and man can rise to godliness or sink into sin ; he would be spiritually free but for himself. The responsibility for evil and sin rests with the *jīva*, and *Īs'vara* is ever pure and

perfect, though, as the moral Ruler, He metes out justice in accordance with the *karma* of the individual. When the *jīva*, as *mumukṣu*, realises its true nature, it sheds its *ahaṅkāra* and offers the true *aham* to the inner Self.

"Our wills are ours we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

This change from the ego-centric predicament to the theo-centric marks a revolution in conduct and is of great spiritual significance.

But there are rebellious wills which are averse to such self-surrender. They are of four types: the ignorant (*mūḍhāḥ*), the lowest of men (*narādhamāḥ*), the deluded (*māyayāpahṛtajñānāḥ*) and the demoniac (*āsurambhāvamāśritāḥ*). The ignorant man forgets his dependence on God and feels that the world exists for his pleasure. Those who have a vague faith in God, but do not seek Him, are the lowest in the human scale. The perverse type employs illicit arguments (*kutarka*) to disprove the existence of God. The demoniac man is the worst sinner of all, because he knows well that there is God, but, seized with hatred, he defies Him and defies himself. These materialists are enveloped in ancient *avidyā*, have a propensity for sensuality and sin and are caught up in the vicious circle of likes and dislikes (*icchā-dveṣa*) and the *samsāric* wheel.

na mam duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ
prapadyante narādhamāḥ |
māyayāpahṛtajñānāḥ
āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ || —vii. 15.

There are four types of men who have faith in God, and they worship Him in four different ways.

caturvidhā bhajante mām
janās sukrtino (a) rjuna |
ārto jijñāsurarthārthī
jñānī ca bharatarsabha || —vii. 16.

They are the man in distress (*ārtaḥ*), the seeker of the self (*jijñāsuḥ*), the man who aspires for wealth and power (*arthārthī*) and the seeker of God (*jñānī*). The first and the third seek God by prayer and praise in order that they may be blessed with the goods of life (*aiśvarya*) extending, it may be, even to world-sovereignty. They have an assured belief in the infinite benevolence of God as the giver of all good. They have their reward; but they cannot attain eternal life as even *Brahma-loka* has a beginning and an end. The universe of space-time is only the bad infinite and in *prākṛta praḷaya* even Brahmā who rules the cosmos has to perish along with it.* The seeker after *kaivalya* or the *kevala* is a contemplative who seeks God to attain the state of *kaivalya* and freedom from the

* viii. 16.

ills of *samsāra*. But he is stranded in singleness or solitude devoid of the bliss of divine life. It is the *jñānī* that seeks God as the Life of his life and Love of his love and yearns for communion and union with Him. God is dear to the *jñānī* and the *jñānī* is dear to God; he realises the truth that Vāsudeva is the Self of all and he is a *mahātmā*.

teṣam jñānī nityayuktaḥ
ekabhaktir viśiṣyate |
priyo hi jñānino (a) tyartham
aham sa ca mama priyaḥ || ——vii. 17.

bahūnām janmanām ante
jñānavān mām prapadyate |
vāsudevas sarvam iti
sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ || —vii. 19.

The whole scheme of *yoga* consisting of *Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga* is the building up of *bhakti* and is a ladder, as it were, from worldliness to divine life. By self-stripping and introversion, the *yogī* turns to God as his very self and becomes a *bhakta* whose only aim in life is absolute devotion to Him. The direct means to *mukti* is *Bhakti Yoga* which is ceaseless meditation on God in the form of remembrance which acquires the character of intuition or direct perception. *Bhakti* is different from the religion of fear, the religion of prayer to God for obtaining boons here and in *Svarga*, and from the religion of the ritualists

who worship the *devas* and not their inner Self. The Lord is a jealous God who insists on exclusive love to Him in absolute self-surrender to His redemptive will. It is not the thing that is offered to God, but the spirit of riveted thought and rapt love behind it, that is pleasing to Him, and even a leaf, flower, fruit or water available everywhere satisfies Him if it is the offering of love.* Whoso loves God with all his heart dwells in Him, and He dwells in him. The *Gītā* thus extols *bhakti* as *guhyatama* or the most sacred truth of religion, superior even to the High *Vedāntic* truths of philosophy (*guhyatara*) and the *Vedic* imperatives of duty which are merely *guhya*. The devotee who dedicates his work to God, whose thought is focussed in Him and whose love is sustained by His love lives only in the life and love of God.

mayyeva mana ādhatsva
mayi buddhim niveśaya |
nīvasiṣyasi mayyeva
ata ūrdhvam na samśayaḥ || —xii. 8.

manmanā bhava mad bhakto
madyājī mām namaskuru |
māmevaiṣyasi satyam te
pratijāne priyo (a) si me || —xviii. 65.

But the mere practice of the presence of God implied in *bhakti*, without His saving grace, does

* ix. 26.

not secure the stability of salvation. The sinfulness of sin is so deeply ingrained in human nature that it cannot be expiated by retribution or even by remorse. As Portia said to Shylock, 'In the course of justice none of us should see salvation.' Though *avidyā-karma* creates the propensity to evil and is beginningless, it is not endless, and it can only be destroyed by *kṛpā* or *dayā*. The *Gītā* is essentially the gospel of redemption through grace. No man can be a light unto himself, and even the rationalistic non-dualist does not expect to realise the Self without relying on the grace of his *guru* or God. The Self cannot be gained by *karma tyāga* or even by philosophic reflection. Whom the Self chooses, by him He is attained; to him the Self reveals His being.* It is only to the loving *bhakta* that *Bhagavān* bestows the knowledge of attaining Him.

teṣām satatayuktānām
bhajatām prītipūrvakam |
dadāmi buddhiyogam tam
yena mām upayānti te || —x. 10.

He is dear to the *jñānī* as his Self and the *jñānī* is dear to Him as His self. The devotee ascends to divine life and divinity descends into the heart of the devotee and *bhakti* has its consummation in

* *Kath. Up.*, I. ii. 22.

the union of the two. It is incarnational love that brings out the redemptive attributes of God like *saulabhya* (easy accessibility to all), *vātsalya* (affection), *āś'ritapāratantṛya* (dependence on the *bhakta*) and *parama kāruṇya* (infinite tenderness). The omnipotence of God is self-limited by righteousness and righteousness is rooted in redemptive mercy and the true incarnational motive consists in the redemption of man from his sinfulness. Egoity or *ahaṅkāra* which is the root-evil of life is removed only by *Īśvara prasāda.*

The whole teaching of the *Gītā* is summed up in the divine imperative of redemption as follows: "Renouncing all *dharmas*, rely on me alone as thy refuge. I will deliver thee from all sins. Grieve not."

sarva dharmān parityajya
mām ekam śaraṇam vraja |
aham tvā sarvapāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ || —xviii. 66.

This verse contains the quintessence of ethical religion and it is God's call to humanity to respond to His redemptive love by absolute self-surrender or *prapatti* and thus attain the stability and security of *mukti.* It brings to light the full implications of the doctrine of *prapatti* as a view and way of life, that Brahman is the Supreme Self of all beings and the Saviour of all *jīvas* and is Himself

the way and the goal of life. The Eternal of eternals in the transcendental sphere becomes the Infinite as the cosmic ground, enters into the finite as its immanent Self and incarnates into humanity. The one increasing inner purpose of this divine descent is the redemption of all *jīvas*. Human endeavour to ascend to divine life by the moral, philosophic and spiritual ways of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* is, by itself, futile and ends in failure. Eternal life is not gained by mere individual effort. The elaborate discipline of *Bhakti Yoga* is rigorous and exacting and does not admit of exceptions, lapses and expiations. The one and only way of release and redemption from the evils of *samsāra* lies in the absolute and deathless faith in *Īśvara* as the only Lord of love without a second, in relying on His grace by shedding all sense of egoistic responsibility and in responding to the call of divine grace. The divine call is the assurance that He gives *bhakti* and *mukti* to all those that are heavily laden and helpless and seek Him as the only hope of life. Emancipation is not exit from life or freedom from action, but is freedom in action, and the *prapanna* realises that the Lord alone is the *upāya* and the *upeya*, the endeavour and the end in life. Stripping himself of the sense of agency, egoity and self-love, he surrenders himself to His redemptive purpose. *Prapatti* may be an

alternative to *bhakti* or the direct way to *mukti*; but, it has universal applicability and every one can attain salvation irrespective of his birth, worth and station in life. S'rī Kṛṣṇa is the very concretion of *kṛpā* and divine Saviour of all, and since every *jīva* has its home in God, its sins are forgivable and forgiven; and thus all may attain *mukti*. The divine imperative thus guarantees eternal blessedness to every one who seeks refuge in the Supreme as his only Saviour. Divine life is the birth right of every man as the son of God and he can regain his godliness; for, he is essentially god-like in nature.

CHAPTER VII

PURUSOTTAMA VIDYĀ

THE *Gītā* is a synoptic philosophy par excellence as it thinks things in their togetherness, correlates the truths of science, ethics and religion and presents them in a clear, distinct and comprehensive way. Chapters 13 and 15 deal with *kṣetra, kṣetrajña* and *Puruṣottama* or the Supreme Self, the scientific view of the process of nature or *prakṛti*, the ethical and spiritual idea of the progress of man or *puruṣa* and the religious teaching of the divine plan and purpose of soul-making extolled as the most sacred *yoga*. *Prakṛti, puruṣa* and *Puruṣottama* are entities that are eternal and not external to one another. Soul-making is the plan of creation and the endless procession of natural events serves as a field for moral and spiritual progress till the *jīva* is *ātmanised* and attains the divine nature. It is scientilc insight to know that matter or *prakṛti* is being and becoming without lapsing into the evils of materialism ; spiritual wisdom to intuit the nature of the self as self-effulgent and free, by avoiding the pitfalls of mentalism and humanism ; and a divine gift to realise that *Paramapuruṣa* is the source, centre and goal of all human striving

or *puruṣaprayatna*. To appreciate the meaning and value of the divine purpose of creation, it may be interesting to compare this view with the western theories of evolutional ethics in the ascending order of importance.

Evolutional ethics starts with the theories of natural selection and survival of the fittest and ends with the hope that in future, egoism and altruism will be perfectly adjusted. If nature is 'red in tooth and claw' and only the fittest survive and not the best, it is difficult to conclude that co-operation will in the end supersede competition. The holistic theory of evolution gives priority to matter and fails to reconcile it with the primacy of the spiritual values of life. According to emergent evolution, consciousness has emerged newly from the stuff of space-time and Deity will be the next arrival; but it does not explain how or why emergents emerge.* Positivism goes a step further when it insists on the need for moral progress and regards the welfare of humanity as its religion, but humanity as such without reference to individuals is an abstraction and there can be no religion of humanity without God. The evolution

* Some evolutionists hold the view that evolution is the unfolding of what is there already and is not the emergence of something new. Still others think that it is a cyclic process in which progress and regress alternate.

of a classless homogeneous society by equalising material goods is sociologically impossible. The ethics of social evolution in terms of western altruistic feeling based on the distrust of intellectual growth leads to racial bias and arrogance and is opposed to the needs of humanism. Higher still in the scale of progress are idealistic theories testifying to the moral and spiritual progress of man. Some of them refer to a growing God proceeding from perfection to perfection. History in the highest sense is not the history of philosophy but is philosophy itself and it is opposed to theology and its ideas of the millennium. The universal is the particular and it lives in the historic expressions. The progressivist thinks that there is more value in the pursuit of truth than in its possession. But endless progress is self-contradictory as there can be no progress without an end to be attained. Supernaturalistic ethics is based on faith in scripture and the apocalyptic idea that on the Day of Judgement the elect will be sent to Heaverr and the heathens will be sent to everlasting hell. This theological faith attributes caprice and cruelty to God, the Giver of all good. The absolutist rejects the above theories and regards the Absolute alone as real, and moral and spiritual progress as self-contradictory.

The *Gītā* view of ethical philosophy remedies the defects of the western theories by its distinction between *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* and *Paramapuruṣa* as taught in the 13th and the 15th Chapters and satisfies the highest needs of science, ethics and religion. The theories of natural evolution, emergence and holism are reinterpreted in terms of the *pariṇāmic* process of *prakṛti*. The views of positivism and social evolution are restated as the ideals of the moral progress of the *puruṣa* and self-realisation in its individual and collective aspects. The law of *pariṇāma* states that *prakṛti* not only is but also becomes. The visible and tangible universe or the world of space-time does not consist of fixed natural kinds but is a process without beginning or end. Likewise, from the biological and psychical standpoint, life is a continuous creative evolution and the psychical processes are particular, perishing states and both life and sensation are a ceaseless flux without any fixity. Matter serves as a medium for soul-making but the materialist who explains the soul in terms of physical and cerebral changes is entirely wrong. The self is free and immortal and, from the moral standpoint, its conduct is not determined by the environment but is the expression of moral freedom and the real possibility of spiritual progress. While process is physical, progress is biographical and self-determined.

Progress involves an ideal to be realised and it is self-knowledge or soul-cognition. Self-realisation has its fulfilment in the religious ideal of the attainment of God-consciousness. The one increasing purpose that runs through the ages is the completion of the work of soul-making by *Puruṣottama*. Though *prakṛti*, *puruṣa* and *Puruṣottama* are distinguishable, they are not really separable. They are eternal entities that are not mutually exclusive as they are organically related like soul and body. Matter is real but materialism is not true; humanity has intrinsic value but humanism is not true. The Absolute or God is real, but absolutism is false.

The 13th and 15th chapters impart the knowledge of the distinction between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* and *Puruṣottama* or what is more important to the spiritual philosopher, the contrast between *kṣetra* and *ksetrajña* or the *jīva* and its body, gross and subtle. The cosmos is constituted by the union of matter and soul or *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* consists of eight categories, namely, the five elements, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra*. It is the aggregate of the elements, *bhūta saṅghāta rūpa*. The *Gītā* practically adopts the *Sāṅkhyan* theory of the evolution of *prakṛti* and the mind-body of the *jīva*, consisting of *mūlaprakṛti*, *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, *manas*, the five elements, five cognitive sense organs, five conative sense organs and objects of

experience or *bhoga*. Matter is the mother of all things. It is the *kṣetra* cr field of the moral and spiritual progress of the *kṣetrajña* or *jīva*, the knowing subject that experiences the pleasures and pains of the mind-body and, owing to its innate moral freedom, the *jīva* can subdue the instincts of *kāma* and *krodha* or sex and anger and the utilitarian ends of success or failure and pleasure or pain and attain self-sovereignty and the intrinsic dignity of personality. The *ātman* is an eternal and spiritual entity and shines by itself freed from the bodily distinctions due to sex, age, caste and the specific forms of animal, human and celestial life. As an aid to self-realisation is enjoined the practice of the virtues like *vairāgya* or self-renouncement, *ahimsā*, *ārjava* or purity of thought, word and deed, faith in the *guru* and *bhakti*. The *jīva* that dwells in the tree of *samsāra* or *aśvattha*, as the *samsārin*, reaches its eternal nature by uprooting the tree with the aid of detachment or *asaṅga*. The relation between the *ātman* and its mind-body is not one of parallelism or interaction nor is it to be viewed in terms of materialism and spiritualism as in western thought. The *kṣetrajña* is, owing to *avidyā*, conjoined with the *kṣetra*, but it can realise its own eternal nature as the *akṣara* and be free from contact with *prakṛti*. The *kṣetrajña* thus realises his spiritual or *kaivalya* state different

from the space-time process and the contractions of mind-body due to *karma*. The mortal self or *kṣara* thus becomes the immortal or eternal *akṣara* beyond *prakṛti*, the pure self (*śuddhātma*) which is *nirguṇa* and *niravayava* and *svaprakāś'a* (self-effulgent). The *kṣetrajña* who identifies himself with *prakṛti* and its *saṅghāta* or the mind-body and subjects himself to the adventures and hardships of *avidyākarma*, at long last knows his spiritual stability, experiences his kinship with other *jīvas* who are also *ātman* and not the body and thus has a vision of the unity of all *jīvas* from Brahmā to the amoeba. Every *jīva* is a person or *ātman* and not a thing or mode of matter and all *jīvas* are similar in their essential nature. Spiritual progress has its consummation in the realisation of *ātman* as the self of man and the practice of *maitrī* and *karuṇa* or benevolence extended to all living beings. While the matter-bound self suffers from the sense of separateness (*pṛthak bhāva*), the freed self realises the kinship of all creatures.

Morality points beyond itself and is fulfilled in spiritual realisation, and spirituality has meaning only in religious experience. Soul culture is no doubt superior to the materialised outlook or *dehātmabhāva*, but it lands us in the godless state of *sāṅkhyan kaivalya* or quietism. The *Gītā* shifts the centre of reference from *puruṣa* to *Purusottama*,

from *adhyātma vidyā* or the philosophy of the self to *Brahmavidyā* or the religious consciousness and thus marks a revolution in ethical religion. *Ātman* is eternal or self-luminous. But *Paramātman* is the All-Self who is the eternal among the eternals, the light of lights and the ever perfect. *Paramapuruṣa* is pure and perfect and it is the divine purpose to divinise the *jīva* and make it perfect. The theory of purpose or teleology applies to the supra-personal as well as to the personal. Teleology as applied to religions is above the finite intellect and will, as it refers not to an external designer but to divine immanence. The infinite will of God who is *satya-kāma* and *satyasaṅkalpa* is immediately self-realised and therefore there is no contradiction in the divine nature between moral progress and divine perfection. The main purpose of *Paramapuruṣa* as the first cause and the final cause of the world order and as the *upāya* and *upeya* or the unity of endeavour and end is the redemption of all *jīvas* from the triple imperfections of ignorance, evil and ugliness, by freeing them from their career of sinfulness and self-alienation from God. Though the Lord in and outside us makes for righteousness by meting out justice to every one according to his *karma*, He is at the same time the world redeemer, as righteousness is pervaded by and transfigured into redemptive love. *Dayā* or forgiveness over-

powers *karma* and ousts it out. It is the free gift of God and the supreme good that is won by human freedom ; moral responsibility is changed into spiritual responsiveness to the divine call of *kṛpā*. The love of *Puruṣottama* to *puruṣa* is prior to and has primacy over the love of *puruṣa* to *puruṣa* ; the Lord says that the *jñānī* who seeks Him is a rare *mahātmā* and is His very life and soul. His love is transcendental in *Paramapada*, invasive in cosmic life turning evil into good, immanent in the heart of all *jīvas* and is an incarnation into history in moments of moral crisis as in the case of Kṛṣṇāvatāra. *Paramātmā* is perfect in *Paramapada* and it is His purpose to perfect every *jīvā*.

The inner meaning of ethical philosophy as outlined in the *Gītā* is thus summed up in the keywords of process, progress, purpose, as employed in science, ethics and religion respectively. The world of *prakṛti* or nature is a cyclic process of *sṛṣṭi-praḷaya* without beginning or end and when *puruṣa* identifies himself with *prakṛti* or matter and becomes a *kṣetrajña* or phenomenalised self, he subjects himself to the travails of birth and death or the ills of *samsāra*. While the empirical self is causally determined by *prakṛti* and *guṇas*, the real self is self-determined and free to shape its destiny. With the help of wisdom or *jñāna*, he comes to think that, by nature, he is *niravayava* and *nirguṇa*, free and

blissful, and strives to regain his self-sovereignty or *maheśvaratva* ; nature serves as a field for his moral and spiritual progress and self-expression and in the state of *ātmajñāna* he is no longer matter-bound but is *kuṭastha* or matter-free. But the spirituality or *kaivalya* of the *akṣara* is mere inner quiet without the positive joy of divine communion, and it is the divine plan and purpose to *brahmanise* the *jīva* * by the alchemy of redemptive love. The wise man who knows this sacred *vidyā* of *Purusottama* transcending *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña* and *kṣara* and *akṣara*, becomes perfect like Him. He overcomes the evils of materialism, humanism and abstract monism and transcends the moral distinctions of *puṇya* and *pāpa* and the condition of *kṣetra* and *kṣetrajña*. This vidyā or philosophy may be called supra-personal absolutism and is the most sacred of all *vidyās*.

* tadā vidvān puṇya-pāpe vidhūya nirāñjanaḥ paramam sāmyam upaiti.—*Muṇḍ. Up.*, III. i. 3.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND ITS SOLUTION

THE enquiry into the problem of evil and suffering is important in every system of ethics. On its right understanding and proper solution depend a satisfactory metaphysics of ethics and ethical religion. The propensities of evil in the individual caused by *avidyā-karma* taint the will and stain the soul itself. Man, in his upward march, which is rendered steep and difficult by these age-long obstacles, has to contend against and overcome them by moral endeavour and spiritual insight. Moralists and theologians have attempted to investigate the source of evil, hoping thereby to obliterate it by rooting out its cause. Others again have pictured good and evil as always fighting against each other; and the duty of the moral man is said to be to ally himself with the good as against the evil. To still others, good and evil are essential antithetical elements in the cosmic scheme. There are those again who hold 'that there is no such thing as evil and that there is nothing good or evil in the world but thinking makes it so'. Thus the problem of evil has been one of the persistent problems of ethics, metaphysics and religion.

The problem may be considered from the standpoint of theism, pantheism and monism and formulated in terms of *karma*, evil and sin. The theory of *karma* may be expounded by distinguishing its three aspects, namely, the psychological, the ethical and the religious. The first gives a causal explanation of moral experience and explains the inequalities of life and the fact of unmerited suffering on the ground that a man reaps what he sows. This scientific view denies caprice and contingency in the cosmic order and its denial of freedom in the realm of morals leads to determinism and fatalism and breeds pessimism. But, ethically considered, man is essentially free to shape his future and attain self-mastery. *Karma* on the religious level refers to the limitations of *pāpa* and *puṇya* and the possibility of overcoming them by God's *kṛpā*. The problem of evil may be analysed into the physical, the moral and the metaphysical. Physical evil is practically the same as suffering, whether it is self-originated or externally originated, but it may not be the effect of moral evil. The suffering of the mother for the sick child is prompted by love and has no taint of evil. Selfless workers even court physical suffering in redressing moral evil. Moral evil is the transgression of the law of duty, and the evil-doer suffers from the sting of conscience. Matter or embodiment is not an

evil; but the materialistic view that makes the self an emergence of matter is false and leads to evil. Metaphysically, evil is privative and contingent and is causally inexplicable. It is said to be due to the obscuring power of *avidyā* or self-contradiction that somehow infects the Absolute, or to the *upādhis*, the real limiting adjuncts of Brahman. But the root cause of evil, *avidyā* or *upādhis*, cannot be determined, as their logical analysis leads to the fallacy of infinite regress. The pantheistic view that whatever is right, leads to shallow optimism and is not supported by the facts of moral experience. The problem of sin is essentially religious, though it is closely related to that of morality. Moral evil is traceable to the violation of a moral obligation; but it deepens into sin when duty regarded as a divine command is violated. *Pāpa karma* is the transgression of the *sāstraic* imperative of duty. Christian ethics describes sin as an inner defect or depravity of human nature and holds that the will is perverted by original sin. Sin is the sense of guilt arising from the collision of the human will with the divine. But this view of statutory religion is not accepted by Kant and he interprets sin ethically as radical evil whose origin in man is timeless. The imperfections of life like error, evil and ugliness are ultimately due to human responsibility and blame-worthiness.

Ethical religion is justified in its recognition of the existence of evil and sin as a fact of experience, and this cannot be explained away dialectically in terms of *avidyā*, *upādhis* or mere appearances of the Absolute, which is beyond the relativity of good and evil and the duality of *puṇya* and *pāpa*. The law of *karma* as a scientific explanation of unmerited suffering makes the *jīva* responsible for all its acts; but, in its religious aspect, *karma* is out there as evil or sin to be destroyed by *kṛpā*. Evil undoubtedly is, but ought not to be; the 'ought to be' rests on a deeper 'is'. The effect of *karma* is entirely destoyed on the awakening of the religious consciousness and *mukti* transcends the moral sphere of *puṇya* and *pāpa*.* The theory of the eternal fight between good and evil or God and the devil argues imperfection in the divine will and affords no hope of stability and security. It tends to make God a finite being fighting against the forces of evil with a will to victory and with the co-operation of man. The doctrine of original sin militates against the view of divine righteousness by attributing arbitrariness and cruelty to God. It is however the faith of ethical religion that evil can be surmounted by goodness and godliness, as evil exists by the good that it contains and is, by itself, sterile and self-nugatory. Though *avidyā-karma*

* *Taitt.* Up., II. ix.

is *anādi* or beginningless in the sense that its origin cannot be logically explained, it has an end. Just as the causal analysis of disease is only for the purpose of curing it, the explanation of evil is only with a view to its eradication. The genetic view dealing with the origin of evil is not so important as the spiritual purpose of liquidating it.

The crux of the problem of ethical religion consists in the reconciliation of the sinfulness of man with the goodness of God. The theological faith that, when we please God by prayer and praise, Providence satisfies human wants and desires, is countered by the argument of the atheist that it is a commercial religion and that the so-called proofs of God based on teleological and moral ideas are just the proofs in favour of atheism and scepticism. The fact of unmerited suffering is a slur on the goodness of God ; the world is not ruled by mercy, but is the worst of all possible worlds. The Infinite as the creator of all beings suffers in infinite ways as a glorified *samsārin*. It is not a consolation to be told that evil is a blessing in disguise and that suffering is beneficial, especially if it is unmerited. The theistic idea that the good man or *sāttvika* merits salvation and that the sinner is hurled into eternal hell suffers from the defects of predestination and divine determinism. The solution of the absolutist is no solution at all as the moral distinc-

tion between good and evil is treated dialectically as the distinction beween *jñāna* and *ajñāna* or the unconditioned and the conditioned, to be sublated or self-transcended. Evil is not transmuted into harmony or absorbed by the reblending of material. Evil is not an original sin nor an inherited propensity, neither *avidyā* nor *upādhi*, but is an actual fall from perfection. The only way of remedying this defect is an ascent to God in the light of ethical religion and the acquiring of godliness. Evil is opposed to goodness and is removed by it and goodness is transfigured into godliness or the purity and perfection of God. While rationalistic ethics insists on a life of righteousness, and religion is faith in the redemptive will of God, ethical religion reconciles the claims of both, by the synthetic view that righteousness is consummated in redemption.

The dualism between *karma* and *kṛpā* is the knotty problem of ethical religion and it can be solved only by an appeal to spiritual experience. The ethics of *karma* and *dharma* is rooted in the religion of redemptive *kṛpā* and the law of retribution has its meaning only in the truth of divine forgiveness. The sinfulness of sin is a measure of the forgiveness of God. Forgiveness and penitence co-exist and, if sin is forgiven, it means that it is forgivable. *Kṛpā* is the free gift of God to the repentant sinner and is not the reward of merit as

held by legalistic or statutory religion. Redemption does not consist in the cancellation of a debt or sin, but is the spiritual transformation of the whole man. Mercy is divine and is not won by merit or conformity to conventional morality. The Redeemer seeks more the sinner that realises his utter unworthiness and craves for mercy in all humility than the pietist that treads the path of virtue and is conscious of his self-righteousness. The redemptive will of the Lord or *Rakṣaka* is immanent in the moral will of man and the attitude and the act of self-surrender remove the collision between the two wills and enable the *prapanna* to know and feel that *Īs'vara* is the only actor in life, being the Inner Self of all, and to act in the light of that conviction. *Dayā* enters into history and, by mediating between the finite and the infinite, changes the mortal into the immortal and thus infinitises the finite. Every man is the son of God and, by giving up his *ahaṅkāra*, he gives his *aham* to God, his real Self, and becomes godlike and perfect.

The central truth of ethical religion is the spiritual faith that the quality of righteousness is fulfilled in redemption and that, though they may be logically distinguished, they cannot spiritually be divided. If righteousness dominates over the redemptive quality, the law of retribution operates with relentless vigour and makes man helpless. If

the redemptive idea has despotic sway over that of justice, it makes God arbitrary. The only way of avoiding the extremes of moral rigourism and divine favouritism lies in giving a new meaning to the terms 'justice' and 'mercy' by a synthetic insight into their inseparable relation. In the divine scheme, mercy is the heart of justice and is not something new that is super-added to it. This view alone bridges the chasm between the supernatural realm of grace and the natural realm of *karma* and dispels the false belief that supernatural grace suspends in a miraculous way the uniformity of the moral order of *karma*. To substitute magic for morality is to destroy the inner worth of moral life. Mercy is not a miracle, but is morality exalted into the religion of fruition. The *mumukṣu* has absolute faith in *Bhagavān* as the *upāya* and the *upeya*, the way and the goal, and as the Saviour of all *jīvas* and, by recognising the futility of human endeavour, casts himself on the mercy of the *Rakṣaka* or Saviour. He renounces the hedonistic pleasures of *Svarga* and *kaivalya*, the moralistic sense of responsibility leading to heaviness of heart and world-weariness and the egoistic idea resulting from *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* or 'I' and 'mine'. The one thing that is required is the knowledge that effort as such is futile without contrition, change of heart or gesture. The infinitesimal and the in-

finite meet in ethical religion and, even in ordinary experience, an insignificant cause may produce a mighty effect like a spark producing a conflagration. A spark of repentance destroys the age-long burden of *avidyā-karma* and sin. By absolute self-surrender to the redemptive will of God and by self-gift to Him who is the Real Self, the *mumukṣu* becomes a *mukta*. The sinner seeks God and is saved and God seeks the sinner and is satisfied. Ultimately, He alone is the *prāpaka* and the *prāpya*, the way and the goal. In this way, the moral idea of effortless effort is consummated in the amoral state of redemption and *mokṣa*.

There is a school of thought holding a view slightly different from that outlined above, which insists on the purely religious view that the grace of God is absolute and unconditioned by human endeavour. Grace is a free gift of God and is not won by human effort. Whom God elects, unto him He reveals Himself, and His grace bloweth where it listeth. The *mumukṣu* has only to respond to the call of forgiveness and his responsibility lies in receiving with gladness what is given spontaneously and not demanding it as a reward for merit. Redemption is not justified causally but justifies itself and it blossoms freely like a flower ; it overflows itself like spring water. It is not meritoriousness that calls out *dayā*, but it is *dayā* that calls out

meritoriousness. It is the operative or antecedent cause of forgiveness and is not the consequent that follows from *yogic* discipline. The pardoning Lord in His infinite tenderness seeks the evil-doer and even relishes his physical evil. There is no one who is free from culpability and sin. To err is human and to forgive is divine. The ascent to God by the way of self-effort like *bhakti* and *prapatti* is futile like Jacob's ladder to Heaven as it topples down by its very weight; but the descent of mercy into humanity is natural and efficacious. Grace becomes the more graceful the more it is unsought. The *mumukṣu* should uproot his *ahaṅkāra* and even the will to seek *mukti*, become a thinking thing and serve humanity without caring for the social distinction based on birth and station in life.

The Christian religion of redemption is often compared to the *Gītā* view and the analogy is striking if not sound. Every man, according to the former, suffers from the taint of original sin and this is removed only by the faith in the redemptive grace of God and the only begotten Son of God who mediates between God and man and atones vicariously for his sins. According to Saint Augustine, grace is a supernatural force infused by God into the elected soul from without and effects a regeneration. Sin is remitted by confession and the process is called justification by works. Other theologians

reject this view and extol inner sanctification and justification by faith. These doctrinal differences are more pronounced in Thomism and Molinism. The former accepts the faith in predestination, in which the human will consents to the inflow of God's grace. The latter rejects the above view as it believes in *gratia co-operans* in which the divine will is alongside of the human. The same opposition is found in the doctrines of mysticism and pietism. Mysticism is inclined towards the faith in the descent of grace into human nature. But pietism stresses the need for the inner conversion or purification of the heart. The conflict between the two faiths is expressed psychologically as that between the self-surrender type and the volitional type and this distinction is said to correspond to the divergent doctrines of the schools of Śri Vaisnavism known as the *mārjāla nyāyā* and the *markaṭa nyāya* or the ways of the cat and the monkey. The Christian theory of the only begotten Son of God, vicarious atonement and the distinction between the elect and the eliminated makes more for exclusiveness and caprice than for universal love. The *Gītā* idea of redemption has its foundation in the ideas of the immanence of God in all beings and their religions, the incarnational entry into human history in its moments of moral and spiritual crisis and the assurance of salvation to all those who are

afflicted at heart spiritually. The Song on the Chariot supplies the philosophical motive to the Sermon on the Mount and checks the theological implications of the doctrines of the only begotten Son, the chosen people and the standardised faith.

The conflict between the two Vaiṣṇavite schools regarding the nature of *Īśvarā kaṭākṣa* or divine grace is, ultimately speaking, not the same as that between *karma* and *kṛpā* or the volitional and the self-surrender types. It arises from the employment of the causal category used in logic and ethics to what is a transcendental experience. Both the schools are agreed in their conclusion that *Īs'vara* is Himself the *upeya* and the *upāya*. The difference is only in the starting points and in the emphasis on the values of experience. If grace is absolute or *nirhetuka*, the consequence would be moral laxity and the predication of caprice to the divine will. If it is *sahetuka*, grace is conditioned and not spontaneous. The real difficulty lies in reconciling the logical and the moral side of religious life with the alogical and the amoral. But it is the faith of ethical religion that the logical and the moral have their completion in the alogical and the amoral. The relation between the two is ultimately not the external view of causality, but the intrinsic and organic view of mystic experience and, in the relation of love, it is difficult to estimate how much

comes from God and how much comes from man. The problem cannot be solved logically and morally ; it is dissolved in mystic experience.

Mysticism defines God as Love and the mystic quest is the spiritual yearning of the *mumukṣu* or the seeker after God for communion with Him. By self-stripping and introversion, the mystic knows that he is the *ātman* different from *prakṛti*, that the Lord is the Life of his life and the Love of his love and seeks union with Him. While the philosopher thinks of the unity of reality, the mystic feels the urge for union with God. Of the four types of devotees recognised by the *Gītā*, the highest place is given to the *jñānī* or the mystic as he alone knows that Vāsudeva pervades all beings without being tainted by their imperfections. The *jñānī's* love for God knows no fear ; love does not bargain for boons ; it is love for love's sake. *Jñāna* is exalted by *bhakti* and *bhakti* is illumined by *jñāna* and the two are transformed into *premā*. From the moral standpoint of *bhakti* the human will is attuned to the divine ; from the religious standpoint, it is self-surrender to His redemptive grace ; but in mysticism as such, *bhakti* is the instinct for the infinite. *Viṣaya kāma* or the animal instinct is changed into *Bhagavat kāma* or the love for God. The instincts of the natural man like fear, anger, hatred and lust are

sublimated and, when they are directed Godward by *bhakti*, they lose their sting and become the instinct for God. Instead of hankering after earthly things, the mystic begins to hunger for God. *Bhakti* is not mere intellectual love or the practice of the presence of God, but is an organic craving for God. The true *bhakta* craves for the intuitive knowledge of the in-dwelling Self which is at once its centre and sanctuary. Sin, in the highest sense of the term, is the feeling of self-alienation and separation from God. The *bhakta* who reaches this state suffers from the agony of separation which is aptly called in mystic language the 'dark night of the soul'.

Love is a two-sided affair and the *bhakta* with his genius for God thirsts for reunion with Him. *Bhagavān* also is seized with soul-thirst and longs for spiritual communion. As the *sat* without a second, He has no joy in aloneness and the creative urge in Him connotes the One becoming the two and enjoying the game of love. The creator is not merely Brahman or *Īśvara*, but is transcendental Beauty incarnating into nature and man, in order to beautify the self, His eternal other, and impart His bliss to it. The Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā* who is the Inner Ruler of all beings is identical with the Kṛṣṇa of the *Bhāgavata* who, by his entrancing beauty, allures all beings and ravishes them out of their

fleshy attractions. He is the divine Alchemist who transmutes the earthly self into the godlike *jñānī* when it renounces the dross of sensuality and egoism. It is the game of love in which the Lord forgets His *Īśvaratva* and seeks the *bhakta* as His very life, light and love, and the *bhakta* forgets his creature consciousness and longs to become one with the Lord as His very self. The distinction between the descent of God and the ascent of man, which is maintained in ethical religion, is now swept away in the reciprocal relation of soul-hunger and God-intoxication. When love becomes irrepressible, the game of love is finished and the thought of separateness expires in the enjoyment of union.

In the fulfilment of love and in ecstasy of divine communion which passeth understanding, all conflicts and contradictions are dissolved. The age-long taint of evil and sin is entirely destroyed. All sense of separateness is swallowed up in the bliss of the unitive consciousness, though there is the separate being of the individual. Bliss is a single experience; but it is a double fruition of the *prāptā* and the *prāpya*. Like the river that flows into the sea and loses itself in the ocean and the bride entering into the arms of her lover and losing her self-feeling, the finite self sheds its finitude and is merged in the Infinit

CHAPTER IX

SPIRITUALITY AND SERVICE

ETHICAL religion has to consider the problem of evil in its social or universal as well as in its individual standpoint. *Karma* has a social side dealt with in cosmic ethics and is a powerful factor in shaping the moral progress of humanity. The evolutionary process of nature and the moral progress of humanity bring to light the truth of the unity of nature and the kinship of humanity as one single family. The *summum bonum* of life is not merely the attainment of spirituality and *mukti* for oneself, but service to all *jīvas* so that they may also enjoy the bliss of divine life. The aching problem of universal religion is the removal of the dualism between individualism and socialism in spiritual life and the reconciliation of the claims of self-culture and altruism, and of salvation and *sarva mukti*. The humanitarian is interested more in the promotion of social well-being than in self-culture and self-realisation. No unselfish man can be at peace with himself when his neighbour's house is on fire or the modesty of a woman is outraged. To strive for and be satisfied with *mukti* while the rest of humanity suffers in this vale of

tears does not appeal to the selfless philanthropist who asks :

> Is true freedom but to break
> Fetters for our own dear sake
> And with leathern hearts forget
> That we owe mankind a debt ?

Sympathy for the sufferer is human enough, but it is difficult to find out the cause of suffering and cure the ills of mankind. A short critical exposition of the theories which seek to solve the problem may now be attempted.

The materialist is not quite justified in his animal faith that the physical well-being of all is the end of altruistic conduct and in his denial of the need for conservation of spiritual values. The utilitarian view that insists on the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number is founded only on enlightened self-love. Even positivism that expounds the religion of humanity as love and service to humanity as a whole ignores the dignity of personality. Humanism goes further when it recognises the intrinsic value of personality ; but, in its insistence on better-worldliness as opposed to other-worldliness, it is purely secular. Buddhism rightly stresses the need for the practice of universal benevolence or *jīva-*

kāruṇya ; but there can be no love for the *jīvas* if there are no *jīvas* at all. Jainism remedies this defect by recognising the existence of *jīvas* and the need for *ahimsā* and love ; but it lacks the religious motive, as there can be no goodness without God, who alone is supremely good. The theist who does good to others in the belief that he is helping God in the evolution of His redemptive purpose suffers from the idea of self-importance and forgets the divine quality of omnipotence. It is the *Gītā* alone that furnishes the highest ethical motive for service to others and the religious motive for God-realisation, as expounded by the *Vedāntic* teachers like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva. But a new orientation to its teaching is given by some eminent modern Indian thinkers due probably to the influence of socialism and humanitarianism, and a brief review of this interpretation may be a fit introduction to the critical study of the classical expositions.

The ethics of *satyāgraha* expounds the *Gītā* view of warfare as the gospel of the fight between good and evil and as a symbolic representation of the duel between the two going on in our moral experience. Soul power confronts brute force and vindictive violence. Socially it is the ethics of passive resistance in which the *satyāgrahī* interposes himself between the aggressive evil-doer and the victim and, by self-suffering and even by death,

lets the evil-doer do his worst and gradually realise the futility and folly of his wicked ways. The passive resister hates evil, but loves the evil-doer and by his active love and non-violence in thought, word and deed converts the wrong-doer and redeems him from his career of wickedness. Violence is the lawless law of the animal man, which begins with blind fury and deepens into hatred and vindictiveness. But evil maintains itself by the good it contains, is sterile and self-destructive and topples down by its very weight. *Ahimsā* is not an act, but an inner attitude of self-purification. It is not a passive state of acquiescing in evil and submitting to it or the negative virtue of harmlessness, but is the weapon of the strong man who combats vice in a spirit of dauntless courage but without any malice in his heart for the wicked man. The practice of *ahimsā* is not merely individualistic, but has a social side in economic, educational and political life and it can be universalised. The approach to the millennium is commensurate with the degree of its universalisation. The *satyāgrahī* is a *karma yogin* who, with a humble and contrite heart, seeks salvation by ceaseless service to humanity and reliance on God who is Eternal Truth and Love.

This theory of *ahimsā* is not accepted by the Tilak school as it insists on the interpretation of the *Gītā* view of warfare as active fight with evil

and the evil-doer. The ethics of warfare consists in the establishment of righteousness by punishing the evil-doer without any feeling of anger or vindictiveness. The law of retribution brings home to the offender the truth that evil ultimately recoils on the evil-doer and that the wages of sin is death. Righteous warfare in the interests of world welfare ought to be extolled as the supreme duty of a true *Kṣatriya* and this view avoids the extremes of pacifism and militarism. The chief end of human life lies in distinterested and selfless service to humanity and the promotion of social solidarity. Individualism defeats the very purpose and plan of life and should be replaced by the ideal of corporate life and co-operative effort. If the ascetic prefers the seclusion of contemplative life to social service when his neighbour is in distress and humanity bleeds with the wrong inflicted on it by the aggressor or tyrant, he violates the rules of cosmic ethics and shirks his duty. The *Gītā* therefore prefers *Karma Yoga* to *Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga* and teaches freedom in action and not freedom from action. The *sthitaprajña* is an expert as a moral philosopher and exemplar in social life. Janaka and Manu have taught by precept and practice that the *mukta* lives for the welfare of others and even *Īs'vara* is ever active though He has nothing to gain by such activity. *Karma* is not subordinate to *bhakti*, nor

is it stultified by *jñāna*. *Karma Yoga* is a direct means to *Advaitic* realisation where one sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self and works for world welfare.

According to the view of Aurobindo Ghosh which is called supramental idealism, the *Gīṭā* teaching of ascent to Brahman or *Puruṣottama* is to be supplemented by the *yoga* of descent from the supramental plane of divine life to the world of matter with a view to spiritualising matter and making the mortal immortal. Divinity descends into matter by a process of self-limitation in order that matter may ascend to the divine level. Matter can be vitalised, mentalised, spiritualised and finally transformed by the Supermind. The lower is not destroyed by the higher, but is assimilated to it. The theory of ascent and descent is the cardinal principle of life leading to the divine integration of all levels of life and completing the circuit. The new *yoga* not merely balances the three aspects of *karma, jñāna* and *bhakti* by divinising human nature, but also synthesises the disciplines relating to *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are the static and dynamic aspects of the same Reality and *avidyā* is only an imperfect aspect of *vidyā* and is not opposed to it. The highest ideal of life is not only *mukti* or freedom but also *bhukti* or enjoyment. The three *Vedāntic* systems of *Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita* and

Advaita do not form an ascending order, but are the three equal aspects or experiences of the same Supermind. In the Supermind, thought, feeling and will are well harmonised. The Absolute and its appearances are integral and the impersonal and the personal are the static and dynamic aspects of the same infinite. Every man has the freedom to realise the divinity in him and all are equally capable of a spiritual ascent and entry into a spiritual brotherhood. There will be a new world order, in which the whole man including his physical nature will be divinised by the removal of disease and death, and society as a whole will be radically transformed. This is a new synthesis of *Advaita* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, of *Śāktaism* and *Bhedābheda* and of the physical and the spiritual, which marks a revolution in religious thought.

But the traditional views of the *Vedāntic* philosophers have their own clearness and distinctness and still hold the field. According to *Advaita* understood as non-dualism, monism or singularism, *mukti* is the immediate knowledge of the identity between the *jīva* and *Īs'vara* and is not the attainment of a far-off divine event. It is transcendental in the sense that the historical is sublated by the ever existent *sat* or the eternal. The subject-object relation is self-contradictory and illusory owing to

adhyāsa, and the illusoriness vanishes in the relationless Absolute or *cit*. Even the bliss of Brahman or *ānanda* has only an empirical value as Brahman itself is bliss and is not the blissful. Thus, in *Advaita*, *Brahma jñāna* is Brahman that is *jñāna* and therefore in *mukti* there is the cessation of all *dharma* or *naiṣkarmya siddhi*. *Karma Yoga* is practised only in the phenomenal world where there is distinction as well as difference between the doer and the deed and the subject and the object. The *ātman* appears to act, but is really actionless as it transcends all moral distinctions. When *avidyā* is consumed by *jñāna*, pure consciousness alone remains as the one without a second. This does not mean that ethics has no place or value in *Advaita*. *Karma Yoga* purifies the mind and frees it from the attractions of *kāma*, and the *mumuksu* does not deviate from the moral path. Even the *jīvanmukta*, in his *vyāvahārika* state, works for the welfare of others, and his chief characteristic is *jīvakaruṇya* and *lokasaṅgraha*. He is an exemplar in moral life and loves all *jīvas* as himself. In all his work, the worker is not ; it is *Īs'vara* that works through him. But in the final state of *mukti* or freedom from embodiment and *avidyā*, the tree of *samsāra* is cut off by detachment or *asaṅga*, all *vāsanās* vanish and the Absolute alone remains as self-identity. The problem of benevolent activity

is dissolved in the transcendental experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi.*

Bhedābheda is opposed to the *Advaitic* view of the self-contradiction between *jñāna* and *karma* and the stultification of *karma* in the identity-consciousness. The central idea of the ethics of *Bhedābheda* is known as *jñāna-karma-samuccaya* or the co-ordination of *jñāna* and *karma.* The moralist insists on the primacy of the will on the ground that consciousness without content is inconceivable and that every state of consciousness is essentially conative. The absolutist demolishes this view dialectically by saying that every *karma* betrays the self-discrepancy between the actual and the ideal and that between the finite and the infinite will, and that the contradiction is overcome when karma is sublated by *jñāna.* The *Bhedābheda-vādin* reconciles the claims of *karma* and *jñāna* or voluntarism and intellectualism by giving a new meaning to the two and integrating them. The attitude of the active man is changed when he dedicates his work to Brahman in the *Gītā* spirit of *Brahmārpaṇa* ; and then morality in its highest sense of consecrated work becomes the dynamic element in divine life. Brahman is only *saguṇa* and not *nirguṇa* and the meditation on Brahman is with a view to attaining union with it and not *aikya* or self-identity. Every act of benevolence is

an example of *niṣkāma karma* or *Brahmārpaṇa* and *karma* is *jñāna* in its concrete and dynamic aspect, and is a direct means to attain Brahman.

Purṇaprajña or Madhvācārya, the expounder of the *Dvaita* school of *Vedānta*, rejects *Advaita* as well as *Bhedābheda* and establishes the theory of realistic pluralism based on the eternal distinction and difference between *cit*, *acit* and *Īs'vara*. This theory upholds the monotheistic truth that Brahman is the supreme self-dependent *Īs'vara* absolutely distinct from the world of *jīvas* utterly depending on His will. Brahman or *Īs'vara* is *svatantra* or self-existent and the *jīva* is *paratantra* or God-dependent. The philosophic knowledge of this distinction results in the religious faith that *Īśvara* is omnipotent and the *jīva* is His eternal *dāsa* or servant. The supreme end of life lies in eternal service to God and to humanity. *Dvaita* ethics is founded on the *Gītā* distinction between the good and the wicked as described in the chapter called "*Devāsura Vibhāga*". Good is radically different from evil and therefore the good man differs from the evil-minded. The former chooses the way of godliness and is elected, but the latter are *tāmasika jīvas* who elect the way of sin and are hurled into eternal hell. The *sāttvika* as a devotee of God meditates on His eminence and holiness and dedicates himself to the service of God and godly-

men in utter humility and even in *mukti* he enjoys the delight of serving God and the eternals in his own unique way.

Vis'iṣṭādvaita reconciles the extremes of *Dvaita* and *Advaita* by its theory of the relation between Brahman and the *jīva* in terms of *s'arīrin* and *s'arīra*. The *jīva* is a prakāra or mode of Brahman and is also an eternal entity though not external to the *Prakārin*. It lives, moves and has its being in Brahman, is controlled by the redemptive will of *Īs'vara* and exists for His satisfaction. Though monadic in substance, the *jīva* has infinite consciousness and all *jīvas* are ultimately alike in their attributive consciousness or *jñāna*. Owing to the confusions of *avidyā*, the limitations of *karma* and the adventures caused by *viṣaya kāma*, the *jīva* subjects itself to the ills of *samsāra*. When *viṣaya kāma* is transformed into *Bhagavat kāma*, the *jīva* sheds its egoism and thirsts for communion with God. Finally the self of sensibility is spiritualised and divinised by the alchemy of love and attains the immortal bliss of *sāyujya*. The true test of spirituality is service to God and to all *jīvas* and the best kind of service is self-donation to the Lord or *s'eṣī* who is Himself the endeavour and the end. The theory of *s'arīrin* and *s arīra* brings out the intimacy between Brahman and the *ātman* on account of the immanence of God in all *jīvas* and the equa-

lity of all *jīvas*, and affords the most inspiring motive for social and spiritual service. Externality does not promote intimacy and unity, as the inseparable relation of *prakāra* and *prakārin* does. Likewise identity consciousness or *aikya* offers no incentive to love and service. But *Vis'iṣṭādvaita* affords an adequate reason for *Brahmanisation* and benevolence by its theory of *avibhāga* and *karma* as *kaiṅkarya*. Brahman enters into the finite self in order to impart Its nature to it and infinitise its content. The *mumukṣu*, as the *seṣa*, effaces himself in the service of the *s'eṣī* and all *jivas*. Thus, while *Advaita* equates Brahman with *jñāna* or pure consciousness and *Dvaita* stresses the omnipotence of God, *Vis'iṣṭādvaita* defines God as Love and thus reconciles the extremes of *Dvaita* and *Advaita*.

Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva are the recognised expositors of the philosophy of *Vedānta* whose quintessence is the *Gītā*. All of them expound the *Gītā* with the authority of immemorial and weighty tradition and intuitive insight. Though their methods of interpretation are divergent and often contradictory, they agree in certain essential points, especially in expounding *Gītā* ethics. The metaphysician who has his own ultimate views on the problems of Reality should become a *mumukṣu* to whom philosophy is not only

a view but also a way of life and finally a seeker after Brahman. Existence and value go together and the chief proof of the existence of Brahman is the intuitive experience of Brahman as the home of all eternal values. True *mumukṣutva* consists in shedding egoism and renouncing worldliness and carnality by shifting the centre from the ego or 'I' to the 'Thou' that is the source of all existents and their inner Self and realising Him. God is the centre of finite life and therefore the *jīva* cannot be self-centred, but should gravitate towards God. The seeker after God is at last blessed with a soul sight of God and has *Brahmadṛṣṭi* and sees everything in God and God in everything. The realisation of Brahman may be regarded as the vertical ascent from the temporal to the eternal. Since spirituality and service go together, the vertical way of *Brahmānubhava* includes the horizontal method of benevolence. Intellectual illumination and ecstasy have their consummation in ethical exaltation which connotes the abandoning of the individualistic or exclusive outlook, and ceaseless service to all *jīvas* including even the sub-human world. Thus the vertical ascent to divine life is practically the same as the horizontal aspect of social and spiritual service. God above is God in man and nature, and spirituality and service are the two aspects of the same religious experience.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

THE supreme value of the Gītā as the Divine Song is the note of harmony that it strikes in dealing with the fundamental problems of the philosophies of nature, spirit and God as indicated in the previous chapters. The three are inter-related and are not mutually exclusive, and therefore the *Gītā* is free from the defects of naturalism, monadism and absolutism. The philosophy of nature recognises in a realistic way the unity of *prakṛti* and its value as an environment for the evolving self. The *Gītā* philosophy of conduct follows the *á priori* road from *prakṛti* to *puruṣa* and *Puruṣottama* and then deduces the lower from the higher and takes its cue from the analysis of the chief factors of conduct, namely, *adhiṣṭhāna* or the bodily locus, *kartā*, the moral and spiritual agent, and *daivam* or divinity. Its metaphysic of morals utilises the philosophy of the embodied self as determined by *prakṛti* and its three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Its spiritual philosophy is an enquiry into the nature of the *puruṣa* or *ātman* and the means of realising it, and the moral theory is evolved from it. Religion has its support in psychology, ethics and the philosophy of the self and

has its foundation in the ontology dealing with the nature of Brahman as the Absolute identified with the supra-personal Self or *Puruṣottama*. He is immanent in all and yet ethically eminent, and is the ultimate subject of moral and spiritual experience. In this way, the *Gītā* integrates human experience in all its levels and satisfies the logical test of coherence and all-comprehensiveness and the ethical and spiritual needs of human perfectability.

The *Gītā* idea of *Puruṣottama* as the supreme end of moral and spiritual endeavour is progressively realised by the three-fold *sādhanas* of *Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga* and defined by the three formulae of conduct, the moral, the spiritual and the religious. The first is the imperative of duty as a divine command or *niṣkāma karma* and is stated thus : "Act only with the knowledge that your action is influenced by *prakṛti* and the interplay of its three *guṇas*." The empirical self falsely identifies itself with *prakṛti*, and its conduct is conditioned by the *guṇas*. When this is realised, one acts according to the moral law which is not impelled by egoistic inclination or prudential calculation, but does one's duty for duty's sake in a disinterested way. It is freedom in action and not freedom from action and it remedies the defects of the ethics of hedonism and asceticism by synthesising *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* as the theory and practice

of moral life. It avoids the extremes of the contemplative and the active life. The second is a spiritual formula and is stated as follows : "Treat the world of living beings in thine own person and in that of others as a *puruṣa* or spiritual personality and not as the product of *prakṛti*." This view gives a positive meaning to the previous negative formula and expounds the way of self-realisation and its intrinsic value. The self or *ātman* has its own freedom, can make or mar its future and is therefore not the slave of fatalism or even of divine determinism. The end as self-realisation has also the advantage of bridging the chasm between egoism and altruism by the idea of the similarity of all *jīvas* in the sub-human, human and celestial kingdoms. The third formula marks the transition from spiritual philosophy to the philosophy of religion and it corrects the evils of subjectivism, which may follow from the second formula. It may be stated thus : "Regard all your actions as determined by *Puruṣottama* who is the inner Self of all beings." Work on the religious level becomes the worship of God and every thought as well as every word and deed is dedicated to God who is Himself the way and end of life and is thus consecrated. The will is in tune with the Infinite and the self is offered to its real Self. This is the highest stage of moral, spiritual and religious

endeavour. As it shifts the centre of activity from the individualistic to the cosmic sphere, from *purusa* to *Paramapuruṣa*, it marks a revolution in conduct and frees the seeker after God from the perils of worldly life and *samsāra*. The three formulae of conduct are not really opposed, but are only different ways of expressing the same truth.

The three classical instances of *yajña*, *dāna* and *tapas* adduced by *Vedānta* as imperatives of duty are interpreted in the light of the three formulae in the ascending scale of values. *Yajña* is duty to the *devas*, *dāna* is duty to society and *tapas* is duty to the self and these three instances are typical cases of conduct and are fairly exhaustive. *Niṣkāma .karma* is disinterested work without *tāmasic* slothfulness and *rājasic* self-glorification and from this standpoint, *yajña* is duty to cosmic gods from whom we derive our psycho-physical nature, without seeking any favour from them; *dāna* is the practice of benevolence without any thought of benefit and *tapas* is self-purification leading to purity of thought, word and deed and freedom from violence and the taint of sex. The second formula dealing with *ātmāvalokana* refers to the virtues of self-sacrifice, *samatva* and intro-version. *Yajña* consists in the burning of the fleshly feeling in the fire of *jñāna*; *dāna* is the

practice of *samatva* or the essential equality of all *jīvas* irrespective of their birth and status, and *tapas* is inwardness or ceaseless meditation on the self to realise its inner quiet. But it is the third formula that furnishes the highest motive to conduct from the religious standpoint. *Yajña* is *Brahmārpaṇa* and *Brahmahavis* and is self-offering to God who is immanent in all gods as their Inner Self. *Dāna* is beneficent activity to all *jīvas* as sons of God and *tapas* is the loving meditation on God as the source and centre of finite life. As *Bhagavān* is Himself the *upāya* and the *upeya*, the triple discipline consisting of spiritual, social and religious duties and virtues has no efficacy in itself as means to *mukti* without the grace of God. By absolute self-surrender to God, the *mumukṣu* seeks Him or is sought by Him, and is freed from ignorance and sinfulness. When religion develops into mysticism, sin means self-alienation from God who is Love and the mystic or *jñānī* pines and pants for reunion with the Beloved. Then the sensualised mind becomes spiritualised, lust becomes love and love deepens into longing for God and ultimately the lover and the Beloved become one and are lost in immortal bliss.

The essentials of the ethical philosophy of the *Gītā* as the gospel of redemptive love are summed up by Yāmunācārya in his "*Gītārtha Saṅgraha*"

and the eighteen chapters or *Yogas* are analysed into three *ṣaṭkas* of six chapters each. *Yoga* is the spiritual aspiration of the self or *ātman* for union with God or *Paramātman* and consists mainly of four stages known as *karma, jñāna, bhakti* and *prapatti.* They throw light on the path from sensuality to spirituality and from spirituality to divine life or *bhakti.* The first section defines the nature of *Karma Yoya* and *Jñāna Yoga* as the two wings of the *ātman* in its flight to the Alone or *ātmāvalokana* and points to self-realisation as the only means to God-realisation. The middle *saṭka* extols *bhakti* as the supreme way to the knowledge of Brahman and the last describes the philosophy of *prakṛti, puruṣa* and *Puruṣottama* in detail, sums up the whole truth, and insists on absolute self-surrender to the Lord as the only way of redemption. The second chapter expounds the eternity of the *ātman* and the ethics of *niṣkāma karma* or disinterested action, and thus correlates *sāṅkhyan* knowledge and *yogic* conduct. The third chapter defines *niṣkāma karma* negatively as the result of the interaction of the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* and positively as consecrated service to *Bhagavān* or *Sarveśvara.* The fourth brings out the *jñāna* aspect of *karma* and reveals the true nature of *avatāra* or incarnation. The fifth stresses the ease and expeditiousness of *Karma Yoga* and the meaning of

samadarsana of the pure self. The sixth chapter explains the nature of *ātmāvalokana* as the fulfilment of the two *Yogas* and the four classes of *Yogis* and marks the transition to spiritual knowledge of *parā vidyā* or the knowledge of God. The middle *ṣaṭka* explains and extols the nature of *Bhagavān* as the Supreme Self, and *Bhakti Yoga* as the most efficacious means of knowing Him and attaining *mukti*. The seventh chapter classifies *bhaktas* into four types, namely, *ārta*, *jijñāsu*, *aiśvaryārthī* and *jñānī* or the man in affliction, the man who seeks the self, the man who seeks worldly goods and the wise man, and assigns the highest place to the *jñānī* who seeks God alone as his *ātman* and who is sought by God as His very life. The eighth chapter analyses the motives and ends of the different seekers of God. The ninth brings to light the transcendental character of the *avatāra* and the essentials of *bhakti*. The tenth expatiates on the infinity of perfections or *kalyāṇa guṇas* of Brahman with a view to awakening the true devotional consciousness of the *bhakta*. The eleventh describes with epic sublimity the cosmic glory or *vibhūti* of *Bhagavān* as experienced by Arjuna who was given the 'vision and faculty divine'. The twelfth chapter states the supreme value of *bhakti*, and indicates the diverse ways of practising it according to the psychological requirements of

the *adhikārī*. The last *ṣaṭka* sums up the central aim of the *Gītā* and rounds off with the truth that absolute self-surrender is the one and only way to redemption. The thirteenth chapter distinguishes between the body as *kṣetra* or the field and the *ātman* as *kṣetrajña* or the dweller in the field, and points out the means of freeing oneself from the bondage of embodiment or *samsāra*. The fourteenth traces the cause of bondage to the egoism arising from interaction of the three *guṇas* with a view to securing the disillusionment of the *ātman*. The fifteenth chapter points to *Puruṣottama* as higher than the highest state of the *jīva*, known as the *akṣara* or freed self. The sixteenth defines the divine type of the *jīva* as the supreme seeker after *Bhagavān* as contrasted with the demoniac type who follows the way of wickedness and the seventeenth analyses the psychological distinctions of conduct as determined by the *guṇas* with a view to defining duty as a divine command. The last chapter insists on *s'araṇāgati* or self-surrender to the Lord as the supreme means of *mokṣa* and extols *kaiṅkarya* as the eternal value of *karma*.

The main topics in the eighteen chapters are further summarised by Vedānta Des'ika as follows: The requirements in the disciple, the dispelling of his confusions, the necessity of *Karma Yoga*, its rational or *jñāna* aspect, the practice of *Yoga*, the

greatness of the *jñāni*, the three kinds of devotees, *Bhakti Yoga*, the infinite glory of God, cosmic vision, the ladder of *bhakti*, the nature of the pure self or *puruṣa*, the analysis of *prakṛti*, the perfections of *Puruṣottama*, *s'āstra* as the highest *pramāṇa*, the nature of duties and the quintessence of the whole teaching.

Hinduism, of all religions, reconciles the conflict between metaphysics and religion by affirming the identity of the Absolute, the all-inclusive whole, with the God of ethical religion who is the Saviour of all. It insists on the uniformity of the cosmic order, on the essential unity of all *jīvas* in spite of their psychological differences due to *karma* and on the possibility of every *jīva* regaining its divine heritage and enjoying for ever the bliss of union and communion. The *Gītā* is the cream of Hinduism as it distinguishes between the essentials of religion and the non-essentials which are merely substitutes and it satisfies the claims of universal religion. It proclaims the truths of the immanence of the God of Love in all beings and in all faiths, the spiritual kinship of all *jīvas* including those in the sub-human kingdom and the perfectability of every *jīva* in the process of *Brahmanisation*. Its social philosophy recognises the spiritual unity of all *jīvas*, but, at the same time, concedes the psychological

truth that persons differ in their temperament and training owing to the influence of the three *guṇas*.

Individuals and communities have freedom to grow in their own way, but the evils of individualism and communalism should go. The evils of exclusiveness and hatred will be removed only when the ethical idea of righteousness or *dharma* replaces the political stress on the rights of man. The acts of duty may be determined by a man's station in life, inherited or chosen; but his inner attitude as defined by the *Gītā* is the same in all, as brought out fully in the story of Dharmavyādha. The *Gītā* teaching has also a profound influence on the problems of political philosophy, as it insists on a kingdom of spiritual ends in which each man is a person or *ātman* who has or can attain moral *svarāj* and not a thing to be used as a means to the selfish ends of exploiters and tyrants. Political autonomy can thrive only in a moral world where persuasion takes the place of compulsion and soul-power has sway over brute force. In an ideal state, wisdom, courage and temperance are well balanced in a just way and wisdom reigns over the other virtues. But such harmony does not mean the golden mean between the spiritual, human and animal sides of life. True harmony in the ethical sense implies moral and spiritual *svarāj* and the conquest of animality by spirituality. Political

svarāj modelled on this plan on an international scale should give liberty to each man to realise his moral and spiritual ideals, concede the equality of all nations to rule themselves and recognise the unity of humanity and social solidarity. Politics is in practice built on expediency; but, as a philosophy, it should be founded on the ideals of moral and spiritual excellence and ultimately on the faith of ethical religion that, when virtue is dethroned by vice, the Lord of righteousness incarnates into history to re-establish the reign of righteousness and redeem man from evil and evil-doers. The *Gītā* is the divine song of love. Nārāyaṇa and *nara* are inseparable. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna are one and as *nara* represents universal man or the whole of humanity, the song is meant for the whole world. It is the call to the spirit of humanity to shed its ignorance and sinfulness and enjoy the hospitality of divine life and love. Sañjaya with his vision and faculty divine heard the song and lost himself in its rapture :

rājan samsmṛtya samsmṛtya
samvādam idam adbhutam |
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyam
hṛsyāmi ca muhur muhuh || —xviii. 76.

What was possible for one man is possible for all mankind. The voice of God is not merely the voice

of duty or *Vedāntic* knowledge, but is the call of divine love. In the immortal words of *Bhagavān*: "Whoever with true devotion worships any deity, in him I deepen that devotion and he ultimately reaches me."

yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktaḥ
śraddhayārcitum icchati |
tasya tasyācalām śraddhām
tām eva vidadhāmyaham || —vii. 21.

and "Even those who worship other divinities worship me."

ye (a) pyanyadevatābhaktāḥ |
yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ |
te (a) pi mām eva kaunteya
yajantyavidhipūrvakam || —ix. 23.

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